INDRA AND VARUNA
IN
INDIAN MYTHOLOGY

DR. (MRS.) USHA CHOUDHURI
INDRAPRASTHA COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

Foreword by

DR. SATYAVRAT SHASTRI
Professor & Head, Deptt of Sanskrit & Dean, Faculty of Arts
UNIVERSITY OF DELHI

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TO MY DEAR PARENTS

FOREWORD

I have great pleasure in introducing to the world of scholars the valuable publication *Indra and Varuṇa in Indian Mythology*. It represents substantially the thesis under the title *Indra and Varuna* in the *Vedas, the Mahābhārata* and the Principal *Purānas* approved for the degree of Ph.D. by the University of Delhi. As the title of the work shows, it deals with the two of the most prominent deities of the Hindu pantheon. Treating them in historical perspective, it traces their gradual development mythologically and philosophically from the period of the Samhitās to that of the Purāṇas and the *Mahābhārata* and brings out vividly the changes, the transformations and the alterations that they have undergone in their contours and configurations.

The deities are credited with many powers which accounts for a variety of names that they have acquired. Yāska makes it clear when he says . *tāsām māhābhāgyād ekaikasyā api bahūni nāmadheyāni bhavanti*',[1] of these (deities), each receives many appellations, on account of his supereminence or diversity of functions To bring out the super-eminence or diverse functions certain myths come to be associated with them This has been the practice since the dawn of history. It has been happening in the case of the human beings as well The more powerful among them, be it physically, mentally or spiritually have certain legends come to be associated with them. When such is the case with human beings, we can imagine as to how forcefully this would happen in the case of the gods. That explains the multiplicity of myths and legends associated with them These legends and myths also have many a time an esoteric or philosophical significance. It requires a discerning mind to bring out this significance. The author of the book happily has such a mind She gives the legends and the myths a searching treatment unravelling in the fullest measure what lies behind them.

It is now an accepted fact that the Vedic gods were deifications of the natural phenomena. The ancient man looked

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1. *Nirukta*, VII. 2.5

with awe and wonder at something unusual going round him. He conceived a supernatural agency at work at all such phenomena Once deifying them, he began to worship them, to propitiate them Since he was in direct contact with the phenomena, he brought himself also mentally in direct communion with the divinity behind them. He would send out invocations to the gods And, as should be expected in a relationship of mutual communion, the gods would respond and would do as he would request them to. They would partake of his offerings, join his feasts, would be angry or happy with him as per the situation. Though placed higher by the human mind, they, being its creations, would share some of its weaknesses Jealous they would feel like the human beings[2] lament like the human beings,[3] boast like the human beings,[4] and even permit themselves sexual aberrations like the human beings.[5]

Early Indian literature furnishes countless instances of the gods coming down to the earth for helping men and men going to the heaven for helping gods As a matter of fact, there was conceived a constant movement between the heaven

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2 Indra would not tolerate any mortal perform hundred Asvamedha sacrifices, keeping the distinction unto himself only He fought with Raghu on that account Anybody practising severe penance he would distract by sending out nymphs. Kālidāsa's remark beautifully sums up this characteristic of the deities *astyetad anyasamādhibhīrutvam devānām* (Abhi Śā Act I)

3 vide Indra's boast, *Rgveda*, X 4 48-49.

4 vide Indra's lament at the change of mind on the part of the Sage Agastya who having first assigned the oblation to the former (Indra) desired to offer it to the Maruts See *Nirukta Agastya Indrāya havir nirupya Marudbhyah sampraditsāñcakāra sa Indra etya paridevayāñcakre* (1 2 5),

na nūnam asti no śvah kas tad veda yad adbhutam/
anyaysya cittam abhisañcarenyam utādhītam vinaśyati//

Rgveda 2 4 10

"There, it seems, it does not exist, i e there is no to morrow, who knows that which is not past? The mind of another is apt to waver Lo! the expected is lost."

5. vide—Indra's making love to Ahalyā, a married woman, which earned him the title Ahalyāyai jāraḥ.

and the earth, the inhabitants of both the worlds frequently exchanging visits. It is absolutely important to understand fully this conception of the ancient mind to grasp its working. It is in this context also that the study of the deities assumes significants. It does not then remain just a puerile exercize of collecting some information about them after a study of the ancient texts but becomes a matter of lively interest for a study of human history

The deities like Indra who held prominent position in the Vedic period lost it in the Purāṇic one yielding the palm to Viṣṇu or Śiva. The form of worship to him also underwent a basic change. The offering of oblations of *ghṛta* or *ghee* in fire to the accompaniment of the chanting of the Vedic hymns yielded place to the offering of flowers The primary meaning of the word *pūjā*, according to some linguisticians,[6] is *puṣpa-karma*, offering of flowers Why should all this have happened is a matter for serious study. According to scholars that was due to the intermingling of different cultural strands in India If that be so, it is all the more reason to investigate it most carefully, which our author has done and for which she deserves full plaudits

The Vedic deities have not remained the subject of treatment in literature only They have found adequate expression in art both of India and South-East Asia. There are countless images of Indra on the mythical three-trunked elephant Airāvata scattered all through South-East Asia, perhaps many times more than the ones in India. Similarly are found there the images of Varuna with his well-known Pāśa, noose. The vehicle in his case at some places has changed. Instead of rājahaṁsa, flamingo or makara, crocodile, he is assigned in them altogether different vehicles of Nāga, serpent and hybrid or joint animal gajasiṁha, elephant-lion.[7]

6 They take it to be a combination word of Dravidian origin, *pu*+*cy* or *Jey*

7. Figures of Varuṇa on both the types of vehicles have been found at Panom Rung in Thailand The writer of these lines has thrown light on them in his article 'Panom Rung Shrine of Thailand' currently under publication in Prof. Jagannath Agrawal Felicitation Volume

A keen scholar, Dr. Mrs. Usha Choudhuri has done full justice to her subject She has put a spotlight on the two of the prominent deities, Indra and Varuṇa whom she took up for study She had to survey for this a vast literature which shows her perseverance and keen and sensitive mind. With its facile expression, the book makes a very pleasant reading. I am pretty certain that it would be well received by the world of scholars

Delhi
15.7.1981

Satya Vrat Shastri
Professor and Head,
Department of Sanskrit
and Dean, Faculty of Arts,
University of Delhi.

PREFACE

The present work is a study of two mythical symbols Indra and Varuṇa of the Vedic poetry and their development in the great epic *Mahābhārata* and the principal Purāṇas. I persued my research work on this subject and got Ph. D. degree from the University of Delhi in 1965. Initially I intended to study only the religious and philosophical aspects of these two mythical symbols and their interpretations but in course of time I got involved also in the study of the mythical poetic symbol with reference to its nature, function and transformation in literature for which the present subject provided ample scope as the journey from the Saṁhitās to the Purāṇas is not only very long but also diverse in language, diction and spirit. The work in its present form, thus, can be called a mythico-philosophical study of the two archetypal symbols Indra and Varuṇa.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Dr. Satya Vrata Shastri, Professor and Head of the Department of Sanskrit, University of Delhi who found time to go through the book and contribute the foreword to it I also thank Shri Nag Sharan Singh of Nag Publishers for undertaking the publication of this work.

Now comes the smiling image of my revered Guru, Late Professor N.N. Choudhuri, before my mind's eye. I humbly bow. He was the guide.

USHA CHOUDHURI

Delhi University
Delhi
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INTRODUCTION

Devasya paśya kāvyaṁ na mamāra na jīryati. The Vedic poetry is supposed to have been fashioned out of the profoundest depths of the spirit. The Vedic poet is called a Ṛṣi (seer) who saw the eternal truths, the fundamental and universal principles of secret coherence and inner unity operative at various levels of cosmic functioning (sākṣātkṛtadharmāṇa ṛṣayo babhūvuḥ) Says Ṛsi Dīrghatamaḥ that the vision of life as expressed in its eternal truth dawns in a mind that is divinely possessed or illumined (devaṁ manaḥ) That vision or realization is not only mysterious and intuitive but so vivid and overpowering that it must flow out, it must be shared; but the ordinary words would not do;—only the words that could become the vehicles of conveying that seeric vision had to be chosen The verbal symbols and images used by the poets to give expression to their divine visions are the Devatās, the mythical symbols. Agni, Indra, Vāyu, Sūrya, Varuṇa, Āpaḥ and Yūpa etc. are all Devatās by the virtue of their being employed by the Vedic seers to convey their visions of the deep-rooted, timeless principles called the archetypes in the modern literary terminology.

The poets weave different myths with these mythical symbols. Yāska says that the seer who has had the vision of reality shows love for mythification.

Ṛṣerdṛṣṭārthasya prītirbhavatyākhyānasaṁyuktā.

(Nir. 10.10.2)

The Veda speaks of the correspondence between the vision, the image and the symbol (Kāsīt pramā pratimā kiṁ nidānam). The twentieth century mythist E. Cassirer says something similar, 'the intuitions present themselves to the mythical mind directly; the momentary apprehension subordinates everything else to itself. Even the thinker is blotted out by the intentions of his thought. The resultant concentration of meaning is so great that the sacred object is felt to be identical with the whole of reality.'

'Deva' conveys the verbal image of knowledge that is illumined and illuminating and devatā the mythical symbol is one that extends that vision (Devaṁ dyutiñca tanotīti devatā). The seers' divine vision of the multi-level archetypal principles designed a world with its mythical figures (devatās) and this gave us a complete mythology portrayed in the hymns of the Veda The mythical symbol, however, like Māyā conceals as well as projects the truth and the devās love concealment i.e. the indirect way of expression (Parokṣapriyā iva hi devāḥ pratyakṣadviṣaḥ) Infact all that is poetic and intuitive cannot be conveyed through the direct mode of expression and this explains why the Devakāvya, the mythical or archetypal poetry is *guhyakāvya*. So, the question of the meaning of the mythical symbols (Devatās) of the Veda has been considered as the basic requirement to understand the poetry of the Veda Says the Vedic seer, 'who knows here and can declare which path leads to the 'illuminating ones.' Their lower abodes are perceived but they actually abide in the most hidden secret laws that transcend all limitations.'

Ko addhā veda ka iha pra vocad
devāṁ acchā pathyā kā sameti;
dadrśra esāmavamā sadānsi
pareṣu yā guhyeṣu vratesu.

RV III 54.5

It is said that one should with effort know the meaning of devatā in every mantra. Only the knowers of the mythical symbol can understand the meaning of the mantra

Veditavyaṁ daivataṁ hi mantre mantre prayatnataḥ
Daivatajño hi mantrāṇām tadarthamavagacchati

A mythical poetic symbol on account of its associative power has the potency to convey multi-level meanings consistent in their essence. Everyone understands the meaning of the mythical symbol according to one's sensitivity and the references of time and space. This aspect of the archetypal symbology was very well recognised in the Vedic literature itself (see last chapter). Durgācārya commenting upon Nir. 2.8 asserts that the mantras of the Veda are endowed with great meaning and are difficult to be known. He says that just

as a horse moves according to the skill of the rider, similarly the Vedic hymns also give deeper and deeper meaning according to the reader's power of comprehension. They give sometimes naturalistic and metaphysical meanings and at times the ritualistic or the microcosmic meanings and there is nothing wrong in accepting all of them: Mahārthā hyete duṣprijñanāśca yathāśvārohavaiśiṣṭyādaśvaḥ sādhuḥ sādhutaraśca vahati, evamete vaktṛvaiśiṣṭyāt sādhūn sādhūtarāṁścārthān sravanti... kvacicca ādhyātmādhidaivādhiyajñopadarśanārtham. Tasmādeteṣu yāvanto'rthāḥ upapadyeran—ādhidaivādhyātmādhiyajñaśrayāḥ sarva eva te yojyaḥ, natrāparādho'sti.

We have taken for our study Indra and Varuṇa the two most important mythical symbols of Vedic poetry. Considerable work has been done by the Western scholars on the Vedic mythology as well as comparative mythology of Indo-European people, the foundation of which was laid down by Prof. Max Muller in "Essay on Comparative Mythology." Various theories have been propounded to interpret Indra and Varuna (last chapter) and corresponding mythical symbols from other mythologies have been compared to show similarities and dissimilarities (i e Indra=Āndra—phonetic affinity but semantic difference; Varuṇa=Ahura Mazda—Zoroastrian= Ouranos—Greek etc.) yet clear concepts regarding these two have not emerged. Infact the Western scholars in their enthusiasm for the science of Comparative Mythology have ignored the most important source of knowing the meaning of the Vedic mythical symbols. The post-Saṁhitā Vedic literature has preserved, we feel, the immediate and the most intimate reactions to the archetypal symbology of the Veda. In fact the Western scholars have delinked the fourfold Vedic literature i.e. the Saṁhitās, the Brāhmaṇas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads representing the vision, the enactment, the metaphysics and the realization respectively. Thus the original myth got delinked from its logical counterparts whereas according to the Indian tradition this fourfold literature is considered a composite whole that fulfils the various needs of man by presenting the truth in its different aspects. The archetypal patterns of situation, thought and feeling presented in the mythopoeic hymnology of the Saṁhitās are dramatized

in the ritualistic act in the Brāhmaṇas. Myth and ritual are both symbolic and present a mode of cognition, a way of life or scheme of thought. 'We engage in rituals in order to transmit collective messages to ourselves' (Edmund leach, Cultural Communication, p. 45). If, however, the ritual becomes a part of the dogmatic theology, it is an enemy to myth. In the Vedic ritualistic literature, however, we come across a consistent attempt at unfolding the symbolism of ritual as well as the deity; it is continued in the Āraṇyakas and its culmination is found in the Upaniṣads. Moreover the study of the Vedic literature and mythology was also separated from the classical literature and the dichotomy of 'religious' and 'secular' literature was created inspite of the accepted dictum that the truth of Veda should be expounded through the Itihāsa and the Purāṇa (Itihāsapurāṇābhyām vedaṁ samupa bṛhṁyeta).

The mythical symbols of the Veda get a continued literary treatment in the classical literature as well. It is a very long and complex journey indeed but 'we should rather think of myth as a river which flows eternally; sometimes it is clear and deep but sometimes it becomes shallow and muddy by having to flow over broad flat lands,' (Richard Chase, Notes on the study of myth) and in the process it reorganizes the traditional elements in the face of new circumstances and also recreats itself having incorporated sometimes the imported components. In this way the life of a myth continues through its perennial literary recreations getting transformed and revealed like the life of a man with its essence remaining the same. The Vedic poetry through its mythical symbols and mythology presents such archetypes, the basic concepts that became the foundation of the Indian view of life and the social and philosophical systems recognized Veda as there ultimate authority. Even the artistic patterns and iconographical designs are traced to the Vedic mythical motifs and figures as has been pointed out by Anand K. Coomaraswamy that 'quantitatively speaking Indian art is to a greater extent than has been supposed an illustration of Vedic ideas (Yakṣas, p. 16). The great part of the later Indian art can only be understood in the light of ideas that are put

forward more clearly and more constantly in the Vedas than anywhere else'. (Yakṣas, p. 19):

Indra and Varuṇa are not only two very important mythical figures in the Veda but are also very closely related to each other and their delineation specially in the Indrāvaruṇā hymns of the Ṛgveda reveal a mythical pattern in which both stand out as complementary forces though diverse in nature. They are conjointly attributed the same functions and represent a perfect pair in the cosmic working. Infact Mitrā-Varuṇā hymns also represent the same truth. The identity of Indra and Mitra hymns is very clear in the Ṛgveda For instance RV. VII. 65.3 speaks of Mitra and Varuṇa in the same way as the RV. VII. 82.2 does of Indra and Varuṇa. Mitra is an epithet of Indra in the Ṛgveda In Avesta Vajra is the main weapon of the god Mitra who is the god of heavenly light the extensive luminous space and deity of truth and faith Thus Mitra and Indra both symbolize the same concept Indra is the symbol of light. He is the spirit, the source of the active force in the cosmos. He is repeatedly called the creator and designated as Brahmā, pitā and janitā. He is attributed the epithet Śiva and he urges even Viṣṇu to carry on the work of sustenance.

Indra is described as the only one (Kevala), limitless (Apāra), changeless (Akalpa), possessed of the Supreme light (Dyumattama) and is called the Supreme (Parama) He is delineated as the inner soul of eyerything (Antarātmā), self-illuminating (Svaroci), pure (Śuddha and Śundhya) and self-knowing (Svarvida). It is said that the manifold bliss filling the earth and heaven abides in Indra just as birds perch upon the leafy tree. It is Indra who is manifested in every object. It is stated in an Indra-hymn that Indra transcends both the worlds in greatness; one half of him is equal to the earth and heaven. Indra is called the Sūryātmā, the soul of the sun and the Suparṇātmā, the soul of the Suparṇa, that denotes the sun, the Vāyu and the other manifest forms of the Supreme force in the Saṁhitās. Indra is portrayed therein as the Universal soul, the individual soul and the Absolute Spirit who is beyond and above all phenomena. This philosophical concept

is presented in the Saṁhitās side by side with details of anthropomorphic as well as the personal aspects of the god.

Varuṇa is described in the Saṁhitās, as associated with Āpaḥ, Ṛta and Māyā. Āpaḥ signifies, the cosmic or primeval waters or matter; and Ṛta denotes the cosmic law. Etymologically Varuna denotes the coverer or encompasser and philosophically signifies the Prakṛti or matter which though is the manifestation of the Puruṣa, yet envelops the latter as it conceals his real absolute nature. The Supreme Being has become all this as a result of his desire to become many; so the whole cosmos is the becoming of the Supreme. The Becoming consists of two entities, the Being and the Non-being or the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti, or the Akṣara and the Kṣara or the Satya and the Ṛta. Indra stands for the former principle whereas Varuṇa denotes the latter. Indra signifies the positive aspect of the reality while Varuṇa signifies the negative aspect of the same that conceals that Reality So that Āpaḥ denoting the Becoming or the manifestation of the Supreme Being is contrary to the real nature of the Being inasmuch as it conceals the real nature of the Being and is therefore metaphorically called the night. Thus Varuna in the Veda is described as the presiding deity of the Āpaḥ or Becoming or Non-Being or Māyā and Indra is expounded as the Being or the Puruṣa. In the microcosm Indra and Varuṇa are the names of the Jīvātmā and the Jīvaprakṛti respectively. From another point of view Indra and Varuna represent Satya, the truth of Being and Ṛta, the truth of Becoming or the Sat and the Asat or the Kṣetrajña or the Kṣetra. Thus it has been set forth that though these two, Indra and Varuṇa, are contrary to each other in nature they work harmoniously in the cosmos and on account of this, they are conjointly addressed as Indrāvaruṇā and jointly attributed the cosmic functions in the Saṁhitās and at the same time Indra and Varuṇa are identical with each other because they are the manifestations of the One Supreme.

So far as the question of the supremacy of Indra over Varuṇa, as raised by the Western scholars is concerned it can be said that both the deities are equally important in the Saṁhitās and even if an impression of the supremacy of Indra over

Varuṇa is created that is due to the fact that in the Vedic vision the bright aspect of the Reality predominates. The Supreme Reality is conceived of as the 'Light'. The famous Gāyatrī mantra that is supposed to contain the essence of all the Vedas, presents the Supreme Being as the 'Divine Light'. (Tat Saviturvareṇyaṁ bhargo devasya dhīmahi dhiyo yonaḥ pracodayāt (RV. 3 62 10).

The Upaniṣads also describe the Supreme Puruṣa as the Eternal Light and One with the complexion of Āditya and beyond all darkness. (Vedāhametaṁ puruṣaṁ mahāntamādityavarṇaṁ tamasaḥ parastāt. Śvet U. 3, 8) The Puruṣa is like a smokeless light (Aṅguṣṭhamātraḥ puruṣo jyotirivādhūmakaḥ Katha 2. 1. 13) the Pure Light of lights (Tacchubhraṁ jyotiṣāṁ jyotiḥ. Mu U. 2.9) In the Gītā, He is portrayed similarly (Jyotiṣāmapitajjyotistamasaḥ. paramucyate. Gitā 13.17). Thus in the Indian philosophy and religion except for its offshoot—the Tantra, the Supreme force is always prayed and worshipped as the bright One, the Light of all lights Since Indra represents the bright aspect or the Puruṣa in comparison to Prakṛti represented by Varuṇa, the Lord of cosmic waters, so he gained ground in the Veda and consequently the largest number of hymns are addressed to Indra; but it must be remembered that the other aspect of the Reality is not forgotten, both the aspects are delineated as co-related to each other as could be seen in the hymns addressed conjointly to Indra and Varuṇa In fact, Varuṇa is exalted to this extent that the readers with a historical approach to the Veda concluded that Varuṇa must have been the Supreme deity who later on was superseded by Indra Our contention is that Indra's supersession of Varuṇa is not a historical but a philosophical phenomenon.

In the Brāhmaṇas Indra is called the soul of the sacrifice and the god of the sacrifice. The idea contained in the Saṁhitās that Indra assumes multifarious forms through his Māyā finds an explicit expression in the Brāhmaṇas and is repeated in the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads. It says that the Puruṣa residing in the right eye is Indra. Him they call Indra because he has enkindled all that exists. The force working in the cosmos is impelled by Indra who is not only

identified with other gods and called by such names as Prajāpati, Puruṣa and Brahmā but is described as the light of lights. Describing Indra the Brāhmaṇas say that the bright lustre is Indra, Indra is Brahma: Indro jyotirjyotiḥ and Tasmādāhendro Brahmeti, Kau. B 14.1; 6 14. The supreme light is Prajāpati or Indra: Yat-śuklam tadaindram and Yatparaṁ bhāḥ prajāpatirvā sa Indro vā. Śat. B. 12.9.1.12 and 2 3.1.7 Thus the Brāhmaṇa texts also look at Indra as the 'Light'. Varuṇa is associated with the cosmic law, nooses and knots and also the waters which stand fully explained in the Brāhmaṇas where it is stated that Āpaḥ or waters signify—the primeval waters or *Virāj*. Moreover Varuṇa is associated with night and darkness *Virāj*, *Āpaḥ* and *Rātri* are called the wives of Varuṇa. In comparison Indra who is delineated as 'Light', the nature of Varuṇa is setforth as 'dark' and thus the Brāhmaṇas further the same spirit of the Saṁhitās regarding Indra and Varuṇa that they represent the positive and the negative aspects of the One Cosmic Reality and as such Indra is the Puruṣa, the light of lights and Varuṇa denotes the Prakṛti or Virāj or Āpaḥ metaphorically called night. The same principle is further explained in the Āraṇyakas which delineate the nature of Indra and Varuṇa in the similar fashion The form of Indra is the form of the day and in the Āraṇyaka Indra says in a style of self-revelation, "I am the Great and his greatness; I am the God and the goddess, I am the Brahma and his power...I am the Prāṇa and the Prajñātmā," and Indra is described in the Āraṇyakas as endless, undecaying and eternal. The seer says in the Āraṇyaka, "I know the Indra's self, that is self effulgent, illuminating and beautiful." In the account of creation described on the analogy of the Puruṣa Sūkta, the Puruṣa, who having created the universal body and the individual bodies entered into them and looked upon everything and is therefore called Idandara or Indra mysteriously. Thus Indra is portrayed in the Āraṇyakas as the Ātman, the Selt, the Being. The Āraṇyakas describe Vuruṇa and his cosmic waters which are stated to have been created by the mind of the Puruṣa. The mind of Puruṣa signifest the Kāma, the desire of the One Supreme to become, to manifiest, to be many. Clearly Āpaḥ and Varuṇa stand for the Becoming;

moreover, the principle of complete dependence of Varuṇa or Āpaḥ on the Puruṣa is beautifully depicted—'All that was produced from the waters was as if non-adhesive and dissoluble, so it needed the support that is Puruṣa. So the Ātman having manifested itself as the world entered into the same. Thus in the Āraṇyakas Indra and Varuṇa and their mutual relationship has been sketched very neatly signifying the same truth of the Saṁhitās and the Brāhmaṇas and this truth is philosophically styled in the Upaniṣads that sought an underlying basis for the subjective and the objective in the universal soul which is identical with the Absolute Brahman symbolising that plenary unity where the limitation of the not-self and all relativity are absent So these two gods Indra and Varuṇa, representing the two aspects of the Cosmic Reality are annihilated by that Eternal word, the One Absolute Brahman. In the Upanisads also, Indra and Varuṇa are described as the forces active in the microcosm and the macrocosm, but when the cosmos is denied they lose their individualities and are indentified with the Absolute Brahman.

In the Mahābhārata one enters entirely into a new world far removed from the Veda in language, diction and spirit. The Hindu Triad, or the Trinity i e. Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva gained importance in the epics and the Purāṇas and we have seen that Indra, the all powerful supreme god of the Veda is reduced to a king of heaven, who is a powerless entity before the Trinity. Similarly Varuṇa, the majestic god of the Ṛgveda becomes a night-god and finally only a god of lakes and pools. Though Āpaḥ or Nārā used to indicate the cosmic or primeval waters in the Mahābhārata yet waters associated with Varuṇa denote simple waters of rivers, pools or lakes of which Varuṇa is called the lord. Thus Indra and Varuṇa fall into the second rank in comparison to the Trinity as they reach the legendary land of the Mahābhārata where they become perfect personified figures and their depiction, as found, is no more marked with suppressed personification. In the Mahābhārata one comes across endless stories related to Indra and Varuṇa and the detailed accounts of their forms, dominions, powers, vehicles, and their relations with their worshippers. It has however, been observed that though the concept of the Trinity

has become prominent in the epic, yet the archetype of the One Supreme 'Tadekam' of the Veda, is the keynote of the epic thought also. So the identity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Indra, Varuṇa, Rudra, Śiva and all other gods as non-different from the Absolute is recognised and expressed again and again in the Mahābhārata. Though Indra and Varuṇa are presented in innumerable myths and legends as subordinate mythical symbols to the new Trinity symbols yet it does not overlook the basic idea of their real nature as the manifestations of the One Supreme. In the Gītā which contains the whole philosophical truth of the Mahābhārata, the Bhagavān says that he is Indra, the god of gods as well as Varuṇa, the lord of waters

The Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata is unique in its discussion on different philosophical concepts In discussion on the concept of Cosmic Mithuna, the complementary dualism, it is stated in very clear terms that Mitra, who is non-different from India is the Purusa and Varuṇa is the Prakṛti,

Avyaktaṁ prakṛtim prāhuḥ puruṣeti ca nirgunam
Tathaiva Mitram Puruṣam Vaiuṇam Prakṛtim tathā.

(Śānti P. 318, 39)

Mahābhārata gives here a chain of mythical pairs which substitute each other to represent the same concept of complementary dualism illustrating what Levi Strauss has stressed upon, 'the world of symbolism is infinitely varied in contents, but always limited in its laws A compilation of known myths and tales would fill an imposing number of volumes. But they can be reduced to a small number of simple types if we abstract, from among the diversity of characters a few elementary fuuctions' The 'Mithuna' conveys the idea of two complementary components in a state of interdependence The word is derived by Yāska from the root √mi meaning to depend, with the suffix *thu* or *tha* having the root √nī or √van as the last member So 'Mithuna' refers to those two who depend on each other, lead each other or win each other (......Samāśritāvanyonyaṁ nayato vanuto vā. Nir. 7,29).

The conception and development of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśa as the main mythical symbols, i.e. the Trinity symbol reached its zenith in the Purāṇas Before the Trinity the Vedic mythical symbols Indra and Varuṇa appear to be less important

but a comprehensive study of the Purāṇas shows that this phenomenon in the Purāṇas creates no dilemma or problem and one cannot miss the real trend of the Puranic thought which is repeatedly setforth that the same Divinity assumes the names of Brahmā, Visnu and Śiva respectively for creation, preservation and destruction and that Indra, Varuṇa, Rudra, Agni, Yama, Vāyu and Sūrya are only the various names of that Supreme. Though in reality they are identical to each other and are *manifestations* of the One Supreme yet phenomenally they are different from each other and therefore Indra and Varuṇa are subordinate to Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva. This abstruse philosophical truth is attempted to be expounded in the Purānas through the medium of legends and like the Mahābhārata, Purāna also presents Indra and Varuṇa as the legendary figures.

In the Purānas we find mainly the religious aspect of these mythical symbols. Religion indeed operates for the preservation of the eternal truths that are visualized by the seeric poets and presented through mythical symbology. Religion is also the emotional reaction to mythology and is manifested in the form of prayers and beliefs. The creation theory of the Purāṇas is very similar to that of the Veda and the concept of Ekārṇava has affinity with the Vedic concept of Āpaḥ. The unique thing that has happened in the Purāṇas is that Indra and Varuṇa have been idolized and different ways of worshipping such as chants for meditation (dhyānamantras) and muttering (Japamantras) etc. have developed.

The Vedic mythical symbols have been interpreted on naturalistic, metaphysical, social, microcosmic as well as ritualistic lines. The keynote in the understanding of the Devatā in the Sanskrit literary tradition has been that the microcosm and the macrocosm are interrelated (Yathā piṇḍe tathā brahmāṇḍe). This idea got recognition in the west after myth entered the field of psychological studies. Says C. G. Jung, 'the psyche contains all the images that have ever given rise to myths and that our unconscious is an acting and suffering subject with an inner drama which primitive man rediscovers by means of analogy in processes of nature both great and small' (Archetypes of the collective unconscious).

In the Vedic tradition however by the microcosmic (Ādhyātmika) are understood the physical, mental, intellectual as well as the spiritual aspects of an individual The Ādhibhautika school of Vedic interpretation represents social critics who seem to have been interested in the uses of the 'devatās' as indicators of the social values of people and the Ṛta is interpreted as social order.

Initially the Western scholars working on the Veda in the 19th and early 20th century had mainly naturalistic and theological or historical approach to the Vedic mythology because the myth was understood in a limited sense during that time. It was in the second decade of this century that the perspective started changing with regard to the concept of myth and by the sixth decade the truth content in the insights of myth became very important. The area of meaning pointed by myth is now shared by anthropology, sociology, psychology, linguistics and literary criticism. The Indian traditional view of seeing the myths as repository of universal truths (satyadharmāḥ) was revived by the modern Indian Vedic scholars like Dayananda and Aurobindo and it has, along with the changed concept of myth in the west, influenced the recent Western approach to the study of mythology The recognition of the archetypal and multilevel significance of the Vedic mythical symbols is found reflected in the works of modern scholars. For instance Prof. L. Renou says in Religions of India, 'The subject is still further complicated by the fact that in the doings of the gods there are several levels of significance.' He says further, 'Abstract ideas lie behind many instances of hypostatization......To translate these names as personal names or agent names is to do violence to Vedic terminology.'

Various interpretations of Indra and Varuṇa from the Brāhmaṇas upto the modern time amply prove the timelessness and universality of a mythical symbol and reveal its potency to unfold the reality at various levels of understanding.

CONTENTS

1

INDRA AND VARUṆA IN THE SAṀHITĀS

The Ṛgveda is the earliest literary monument in the history of mankind. The poetry of the Ṛgveda is mythical in nature and its language is symbolic The Ṛgveda is the Veda of *Ṛks*. The word *Ṛk* means an inspired poem It has a symantic affinity with *śloka* (a stanza or verse in general) as both are derived from roots √*arch* and √*ślok* that have the same meaning i e., to extol, to eulogize – that is to raise by words an object to an extraordinary level where it loses its ordinary meaning and symbolizes a higher unearthly experience of a poet or seer (Ṛsi, Kavi, Krāntadarsī) The Veda is known as 'divinely inspired ' The word of Veda is poetic, symbolic and mythical A mythical symbol is suggestive of certain basic, eternal and universal concept The mythical symbol employed in the Ṛgvedic poetry have been adopted by all the other Samhitās, Brāhmanas, Āraṇyakas, Upanisads and later by the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas. Indra and Varuna are two very important mythical characters, who symbolize the archetype of complementary dualism at various levels of meaning through the various descriptions of varied nature. The seeric poets of Veda have delineated Indra as the supreme power behind the microcosmic and the macrocosmic activity. He is the mighty warrior and slayer of demons and is also described as the symbol of the transcendental reality, the Absolute One. The image of Varuṇa that appears most vividly in the Vedic poems, is that he is the ordainer and guardian of law and is related to Āpaḥ (cosmic waters) and Māyā (cosmic energy).

INDRA IN THE ṚGVEDA

Students of the Veda have recognized the inimitable position of Indra among the Vedic deities. Heterogenous theories

have been propounded to explain the nature of Indra Even then the scholars have felt the insufficiency of exact understanding of the subject on account of its variable delineations. Says J Muir, while dealing with Indra, that the reader who is not familiarly acquainted with the hymns of the Veda, either in the original or by translations, may think that he perceives an incompatibility between the conceptions of the god [1]

Indra is the most prominent devatā of the Ṛgveda He is eulogized in 250 hymns or almost a quarter of the whole collection. In about 50 more hymns he is sung along with other deities The anthropomorphic description of Indra is quite predominant and he is related with many myths. But, though apparently there seems to be a contrariety regarding the impressions of Indra, still his essential nature should not be regarded as obscure He is the presiding force behind several phenomena and symbolises courage, valour, power and strength. All these characteristics are personified in him when he is anthropomorphically described He is known as a mighty warrior god constantly fighting and ousting the evil and preserving the Ṛta He symbolises the concept of the Supreme and on the microcosmic lines the principle of the individual soul The Rgvedic poetry presents Indra as a force behind the natural phenomena, and the descriptions are anthropomorphic. Indra is a positive, victorious and valiant 'devatā' who is constantly battling with the obstructing forces to a grand triumph Infact without him people do not win a battle [2]

As the power of the middle region he pervades the air. With Vāyu as his charioteer,[3] he drives through the air in a golden car,[4] drawn by two tawny steeds [5] He is the force of thunder and lightning which kills Vṛtra, the obstructor of water and spares it for the human beings [6] He is the sky.[7] All the three regions are pervaded by him The whole

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1 Original Sanskrit Texts, Vol. V p 115
2 RV. 2 12 9 Yasmānna ṛte vijayante janāsaḥ.
3. Ibid, 4 46, 2.
4 RV 6 29, 2
5 Ibid., 3. 45, 1.
6. Ibid , 2 20, 7.
7. Ibid , 2. 15, 2.

universe is illumined by his lustre and valour.[8] He is the controller of the shining stars[9] He is glorified as the light of the sun or fire. One of the horses of the chariot of Indra is the fire itself. Indra is described as taking the forms of Sūrya, Manu and Soma.[10] His bright face itself is the sun.[11] He moves round the world in the speedy chariot of the sun[12] His colour is golden[13] and he envelopes himself as if with the shining lustre of the sun[14] He is also directly called Sūrya.[15] Thus Indra is the force and light of the universe. It suggests that Sūrya is conceived as the vehicle of Indra. He is the one who is manifest in the rays of the sun. In the Īśopaniṣad the same concept is worded as 'O Sun, collect and gather away your rays so that I may look at your auspicious and lustrous form The purusa that is there is myself'

Anthropomorphically he is delineated as tawny-haired and tawny-bearded[15] His complexion is golden.[16] Says RV. 2.16.2, 'Nothing exists without that great one. All the powers are centred in him He has the Soma in his stomach and holds vajra in his hand His body has the supreme strength and his head bears the highest knowledge' Soma does not mean an intoxicating drink but the joy of creation as has been explained later on He has vajra as his mighty weapon which has been fashioned for him by Tvaṣṭā[18] Carrying in his hand a golden whip[19] he is borne on a shining golden car with a thousand supports,[20] that moves more swiftly than thought.[21] His car and horses appear to have been formed by the Ribhus.[22]

Exhilerated by the supreme joyful play and escorted by the Maruts he encounters his chief enemies with his thunderbolt. These enemies are called by a variety of names such as Vrtra, Ahi, Śuṣna, Namuci, Pipru, Śambara, Uraṇa etc When

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8 RV. 8 12, 24
9. Ibid, 8 14, 9
10. Ibid, 4 26, 1
11. Ibid, 10 48, 3
12. Ibid., 10 49, 7. Ahaṁ Sūryasya pariyāmyāśubhiḥ praitaśebhir-vahamāna ojasā
13. Ibid, 1. 7, 1
14. Ibid., 10. 112, 3
15. RV. 10. 89, 2
16. Ibid, 10 96, 5, 8, 10 23, 4
17 Ibid., 1. 7, 2
18. Ibid, 1. 32, 2
19. Ibid, 8. 33, 11
20. Ibid, 6. 29, 2
21. Ibid., 10. 112, 2
22. Ibid., 1. 111, 1

Indra fights with his enemies heaven and earth quake with affright at the crash of Indra's thunder, and even Tvaṣṭā himself, who fashioned the thunderbolt, trembles at the manifestation of their wielder's anger[23] He slew the dragon covert in the waters. Barricading the waters and the sky, he smote Vṛtra, who enclosed the waters, like a tree with his bolt[24] So Indra is Vṛtrahan Indra killed Uraṇa having 99 arms,[25] and Viśvarūpa having three heads and six eyes.[26] He crushed Arbuda with his foot.[27] He struck off the head of another demon Namuci with the foam of the waters.[28] Another demon Śuṣṇa called a wild beast, is identified with Vṛtra by certain western scholars[29] Indra and Viṣṇu conjointly kill Śambara and Pipru who are classed as Asuras In this way Indra annihilates the Asuras,[30] consumes the Rākṣasas[31] and overcomes the malignant spirits (druhyas).[32] These fights, encounters and slaying of the enemies by Indra can be interpreted in two ways One, as a mighty god he saves his devotees from the bad elements of this world or secondly, these fights represent the struggle between the good and the evil or as Aurobindo puts it, between the powers of the higher good and the lower desire[33] They are symbolic of the strife between the constructive and the destructive, the progressive and the regressive forces that is operative at various levels of human and trans-human existence Indra represents the eternal source of the constructive victorious power.

The epithets Maghavan, Śatakratuḥ, Vajrī, Vṛtrahā, Śūraḥ, Harivān, Vṛṣā, Vṛṣabhaḥ characterize Indra for more than hundred times each and he is called Devaḥ, Adrivat, Ugra, Girvṇā, Puruhūtaḥ, Puruṣṭu, Śaviṣṭhah, Vasu, Vajrahastaḥ, Vidvān, Savdhāvān, Somapāḥ, Satpatih, for about fifty times along with other epithets that reveal the nature of Indra. The epithet that is singularly used for Indra is

23 RV 1 80, 14
24 Ibid , 1 32, 5, 6, 20, , 2, 11, 5 , 2 14, 2
25 Ibid , 2 14, 4
26. Ibid , 10 99, 6
27 Ibid., 1 51, 6
28. Ibid., 8. 14, 13
29 Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads, p. 130
30 RV 8. 85, 9
31 Ibid , 6 18, 10
32. Ibid , 4 23, 7
33 Aurobindo, On the Vedas, p. 54

Śatakratu, one endowed with hundred powers. In fact Indra stands for the supreme force. He is called the son of strength in the Veda. In RV. 10 153.2 Indra is said to have been born from valour itself, from the overwhelming power, from the creative energy. 'Among the numerous places where the word (Sahas) occurs, there are many in which it is attributed to Indra the God who in the belief of Vedic man represented force, energy and vitality in nature and who was intimately connected with vegetative life and victoriousness. Not rarely, Sahas, like other *daseinsmdchte* or power substances, impresses us as constituting for the ancient Indian, a sort of entity, substance or potency supposed to be present in beings, objects or phenomena, and by virtue of which these are powerful, effective or influential Thus in RV. 1 55.8 Indra is described as carrying inexhaustible wealth in his hands and possessing invincible 'sahas' in or on his body.'[34] He is the Sahiṣṭhah, Sahāvān (the strongest) and bears the most excellent, supreme power (*jyeṣṭham tad dadhise Sahah.* RV 8 4.4.)

The idea prevailing in a mystic form in the Ṛgveda that Indra is the lord of force, takes philosophical form in the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, where Indra is categorically stated as symbolic of the force behind the Piṇḍa (microcosm) as well as the Brahmānda (macrocosm). The different gods represent the various forms of the manifestation of that supreme force and Indra's sovereignty over the other gods only declares, that he stands for the 'entirety of the forces.' Indra is addressed as the son of strength as well as the lord of strength. 'But there can be no doubt that both expressions, son of strength and lord of strength, are practically speaking synonymous, or rather, they denote two aspects of the same conception '[35]

A review of the wives of Indra would also show that they denote strength. It is an usual practice in mythological language to present the bearer of a specific potency and the potency as a complete whole and the hero and heroism as a

34 Gonda, G , Some observations on the relations between "Gods" and "Powers" in the Veda Apropos of the Phrase Sūnuḥ Sahasaḥ, p. 14

35 Ibid , p. 52

complementary pair. In the same way a forceful person and his force are delineated as husband and wife. Remarks G. Gonda, that it is clear that a mighty person and his specific might were like a god and his śakti in later times, when the latter was considered, as his spouse—conceived as a kind of *unite—dualite*, as a pair of complements forming unity [36]

Indrāṇī is repeatedly mentioned in the Veda as the wife of Indra The 86th hymn of the tenth Maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda is devoted to her delineation that is characterized by an imposition of the qualities of Indra over her personality. She is called Sūrapatnī, the wife of the strong one. The other name of Indra's wife is Śacī that denotes action[37] and Indra is the lord of action

The name of Indra's mother is Śavasī,[38] one who is endowed with strength Śavasī addresses Indra by the vocative 'putra' [39] The only admissible conclusion seems to be that the personal view of the god's origin could in ancient Vedic times, alternate with in impersonal [40] Indra is called the Lord of savas and son of śavas He is the lord of heroism, prowess, superiority and is the invincible, strong and victorious god [41] The idea of complete dependence upon Indra is poetically presented in these words, "We lean on thee like old men on a staff "[42]

Indra's descriptions in the Ṛgveda justify his name [43] He is undoubtedly the all powerful supreme lord, who, the seer finds, is above and beyond all praise : "Still higher at each strain of mine, thunder-armed Indra's praise rise I find no praise worthy of him "[44]

He is the king (Rājā, Īśānā) He, the thunderwielder, is

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36. Gonda G , Some observations on the relations between 'Gods' and 'Powers' in the Veda, p 52
37 Nirukta. 12/16 Śacībhiḥ karmabhiḥ
38 RV 8 54,5
39 Ibid , 8.77,2
40 G Gonda, Some observations on the relation between "Gods" and "Powers" in the Veda.
41 RV 1 11,2
42 Ibid , 8, 45, 20
43 Various etymologies of the word are given in chapter VII
44 RV 1 7 7 Tuñje Tuñje ya uttare stomā Indrasya vajriṇaḥ/ Na vindhe asya suṣṭutim.

the king of all that moves and moves not and of creatures, who are tame and horned. Over all living men he rules as a sovereign containing[45] all as spokes within the felly. He, the Vṛṣabha is the lord of races.[46] He is the king of both worlds.[47] He is the lord of heavenly treasures and all terrestrial wealth that earth possesses.[48] He is the lord of people.[49] He is the lord of bliss.[50] He is unrivalled suzerain of the whole universe[51] He controls all effort and achievement.[52] He is the master (Pati) of the whole animate world,[53] heaven,[54] people,[55] tribes[56] movements,[57] energy,[58] strong lustre,[59] rivers full of bounties.[60] and joyous song.[61] He is the Samrāt, the sovereign of the vast extended heaven and the regions. He is the director of wealth or rays of light. He is the only lord of this universe.[62] The epithet Gopati used for Indra also conveys his lordship over the regions that he created. Even the earliest (foremost) devas submitted their powers to his supreme dominion.[63] He is the independent ruler (Svarāt). Indra is thus the supreme lord in the Ṛgveda. Everything of the universe is governed by him

Indra in the Vedas is portrayed as Janitā[64] (the creator). He is the generator of horses, cows[65], heaven, earth,[66] sun,[67] and

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45 RV 1 32,15
46 Ibid , 1 177,1, 4 17,5, 6 35,5, 7 27,3
47 Ibid , 6 47,16
48 Ibid , 2 14,11.
49 Ibid , 4. 17,30, 8 64,3
50 Ibid , 6. 37,2, 6 20,3
51 Ibid., 6 36,4
52 Ibid , 8 37,5
53 Ibid , 9 101,5
54 Ibid., 8. 13,8-9, 8 98,4-6
55 Ibid , 6. 36,4
56 Ibid., 6 45,16, 8 13,9
57. Ibid., 6 45,10
58 Ibid , 10 23,3 Indro vājasya dirghaśravasaspatiḥ, The word Vāja is to be traced to the root √vij to be speedy that is related to the Indo-European *ueg*—to be active or powerful So Pati Vājasya dirghaśravasaḥ means the lord of all activity, movement and energy
59 Ibid , 10 23,3
60 Ibid , 10 180,1
61 Ibid , 3. 31,18
62. Ibid , 8 37,3
63 Ibid , 7. 21,7 Devaścit te asuryāya pūrve'nu kṣatrāya mamire sahāmsi
64 Ibid., 1. 129,11; 8. 99,5
65. Ibid , 8. 36,5. Janitāśvānāṁ Janitā gavāmasi. . .
66. Ibid., 8. 36,4 Janitā divo janitā pṛthivyāḥ.
67. Ibid , 3 49,4 Kṣapām vastā janitā sūryasya . . .

is also the father of the fathers[68]

He is the father (Pitā)[69] He is the maker of the waters,[70] of light,[71] and of valiant riches.[72] He, creating his Māyā, forms various shapes.[73] He is the supreme creator of the universe[74]

Indra himself declares, "Here am I the lord, look at me, I rule over all the creatures owing to my greatness The commands of Ṛta glorify me A breaker as I am, I break open all the regions"[75] He is described as Brahmā, the creator[76] He is 'Krtabrahmā'[77] He is the maker of law (Dharmakṛta)[78] He is represented in every form That is his only form for us to look at He attains multifarious forms through his own will (Māyābhih).[79] Indra is Dhartā, the sustainer of the heaven and the world[80] He is the upholder of all riches[81] He is Avitā, the protector[82] He is the defender of the actions,[83] of worshippers,[84] of friendly people[85] and of the singers of his praise[86] Throughout the hymns of the Vedas Indra's protection, help, benevolence and guardianship are sought It is prayed that he may never withdraw from us his friendship, but be our guard and strong defender.[87]

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68 RV 4, 17, 17 Sakhā pitā pitṛtamah pitṛnām kartemu lokamuśate vayodhāh

69 Ibid, 3 31,12, 4 17,17, 8 6,10, 8 52,5, 10 8,7, 10 22,3

70 Ibid, 8 96,19

71 Ibid, 8 16,10

72 Ibid, 1 5,9, 1 8,1

73 Ibid, 3 53 8 Rūpam rūpam maghavā bobhaviti māyah kṛnvānastanvam parisvām.

74 Ibid, 8 92,8 Visvakarmā visvadevo mahām asi

75 Ibid, 8 100,4

76 Ibid, 8 16 7. Indro brahmendra ṛṣirindraḥ puru puruhutaḥ. Mahān mahībhiḥ śacibhiḥ.

77 Ibid, 6 20,3

78. Ibid, 3. 49,4

79 RV 6 47,18
Rūpam rūpam pratirūpo bābhūva tadasya rūpam praticakṣnāya
Indro māyābhih pururūpa iyate yuktā hyasya harayah satādasa
Sāyanācārya on Maya,
'Jñananāmaitat Jñanai ātmiyai Sankalpai'

80 Ibid, 3 49,4

81 Ibid, 1 33,5

82 Ibid, 1 29,6,33 4 34,5, 7 32,11, 8, 13,15,26

83 Ibid, 4 16,18

84 Ibid, 4 31,3

85 Ibid, 4 17,18

86 Ibid, 10. 24,3

87 Ibid, 4 16,20

Indra is invoked as a friend (Sakhā) for more than thirty times in the Ṛgveda. He extends his friendly hand to those who seek his friendship As says the Veda, 'You are a helping friend to those who look for thy friendship.'[88] He is the friend of sages (Sakhā Munīnām)[89] and of friendly people (Sakhā Sakhānām).[90] He is the friend of blessed ones (Sakhā somyā- nām).[91] He is everfresh friend (Mitra Navīyān) to the dextral person. He is addressed as, "Thou, lord of friends, art thy friend's best supporter."[92]

In the Rgveda, there is categorical assertion of Indra's hold over Viṣṇu who is one of the solar deities in the Vedic literature and is, in later literature, regarded as the sustainer of the world though of course, the work of sustenance of the world is ascribed to Viṣṇu in the Rgveda as well. Says RV 'All these things Viṣṇu brought, the lord of ampler strides, whom thou (Indra) had sent.[93] Through thine energy, Viṣṇu strode wide those three steps of his, and thus your creations roll on.[94] Viṣṇu is the faithful comrade of Indra (Indrasya yujyah sakhā)[95] Indra urges Viṣṇu to carry on his work of sustenance In other words one aspect of Indra's personality is reflected in his work of the sustenance of the world

The epithet Śiva for Indra occurs at many places in the text of the Rgveda. Moreover, the examination of the context exhibiting this epithet shows that it carries the attached significance and in such references Indra is delineated as one who is the destroyer of evil and imparter of welfare and affluence It would be clear from the following references—

May Indra called with solemn invocations, the young, the friend, the Śiva, be the protector of mankind[96] You who have been singer's friend, Śiva, the friend with aid, as such O Indra favour us.[97] This Indra is Śiva, our friend He sends us in a full broad stream riches and horses, kine and corn[98]

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88 RV 5 167,18
89 Ibid., 8 17,14
90 Ibid,, 1 84,4
91 Ibid , 4 17,17
92. Ibid , 1 70,5
9 . Ibid , 8. 77,10
94 RV 8 12,27-28
95 Ibid , 1 22,10
96 Ibid , 2 20,3
97 Ibid., 6 45,17
98. Ibid , 8. 93,3

In the RV. 8.96 Indra is beautifully portrayed and very vividly are delineated the auspicious and destructive trends of his personality. He is called *Śivatama*,[99] the most auspicious one. He is strong, destroyer of demons, protector and is sought for bliss The word 'paśva' occurring in the same verse is significant for Indra is prayed for the welfare of Paśus or beings And we know that Paśupati is a name of Śiva. Another verse says, "Indra, thou art our with thy protection, a guardian near to your men, who love you truly You actively defend the person who gives away (Dāśuṣ) and is drawn near to you with right devotion."

So Indra of the Rgveda is the possessor of terrible as well as placid qualities He is destroyer of the wicked but a great friend of the godly people

In the divine joy of tāṇḍava dance Lord Śiva is ever protecting the creatures, similarly in the supreme joy of Soma, Indra guards the beings. He destroys and regenerates. In the RV 7 22 it is said that having drunk the Soma, he alone kills the Vṛtras The Soma is described as auspicious and beautiful (Yujya, Cāru)[100] It implies that Soma is not intoxicating Drinking of Soma represents only the Supreme's joyful play that extends the cosmic action involving constant destruction and projection In the same hymn the word Śivāni is used as an epithet for the friendship of Indra[101]

So we find that the epithet Śiva is very significantly used for Indra in the Rgveda, only to represent an aspect of Indra which later on is singularly represented personified as Śiva in the epics and the Purānas

Indra is addressed for more than hundred times as Ghora,

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99. RV 8 96 10

    Maha ugrāya tavase suvṛktim preraya Śivatamāya paśvaḥ
    Girvāhase gira indrāya pūrvirdhehi tanve kuvidaṅga vedat
    Sāyana commenting upon Paśvaḥ says,
    'Paśvah pasoḥ Dvipāccatuṣpācca Pasormamāsmadīyāya gave vā Yadvā paśoratIndri yārtham draṣṭurmama dhanādikam dātum gave Sukhādikam pradātumindrāya stutim preraya'

100. Ibid, 7 22 2

101. Ibid. 7 22 9, Asme te santu sakhyā śivāni

and Ugra, the names for Śiva.[102] In the RV. 7.28.2, it is said, 'O the strong god, you protect the hymns of the seers, may your glory reach your devotee. O the terrible god, you the awful, and the holder of the thunderbolt are unassailable by the enemies.'[103]

'Of whom, the Ghora, they ask where is he? Or verily they say of him, he is not. He takes away like a haw strength from the enemy. Have faith in Him for He, O men, is Indra.'[104] He may be terrible for the bad people but he is also the inspirer of firm faith that is rooted in truth (śrat) in those who seek to know him.

The RV 1 52 8 says

'You hold in your arms the metal thunderbolt and fix in the heaven the sun for all to see' The Ṛgveda describes Indra as Abhayaṁkara[105] as well as Kālātmaka[106] He is the dispeller of fear as well as is the death incarnate. So it is in the Vedic Indra that we have a glimpse of the Purāṇic Śiva

According to Śākta Tantra, Nirguna Śiva is Saccidānanda. Kulārnava says,[107] 'Śiva is the supreme Brahman, the all knowing (Sarvajña) and the creator of all He is one without a second (Advaya) He is light itself He changes not and is without beginning or end. He is attributeless and above the highest' The Mahānirvāṇa Tantra[108] describes Śiva Brahman as Saccidānanda, eternal (Nitya), changeless (Nirvikāra), partless (Niṣkala), pure (Nirmala), attributeless (Nirguṇa), formless (Arūpa), imperishable (Akṣara), all pervading like space (Vyomasannibha), self-illuminating (Svyamjyotiḥ), reality (Tattva), who is beyond mind and speech and is to be approached through bhāvanā alone (bhāvanāgamya) As a personal God Śiva is the Lord of all (Īśvara) He is the all knower (Sarvajña), and the soul of the universe (Viśvātmā).

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102. Ghoro hare dārune ca iti Haimaḥ Ugraḥ Kapardī Śrīkaṇṭha. AK 1 32
103. R.V 7. 28,2
104. Ibid., 2 12,5
105. Ibid, 8. 61,13 Yata Indra bhayāmahe tato no abhayam kṛdhi.
106. RV. 10. 55,5 Sāyanācārya commenting on this Ṛk says, 'Anayā Kālatmaka Indra stūyate'.
107. Kulārṇava 1 6.8, III 92 93: IX 7.
108. Mahānirvāṇa. I.61: III 68.

In the Veda unlike the philosophical treatises this twofold aspect of the supreme entity is not separately delineated but still is very discriminatingly displayed in the mythopoeic tone of the Vedic hymns Indra is described as the only one (Kevala),[109] limitless (Apāra)[110] and beyond change (Akalpa)[111] He is the highest light (Dyumattama)[112] He is the Supreme (Parama)[113] He is self-illuminating (Svaroci)[114] He is Pure (Śuddha[115] and Śundhya)[116] and self-knowing (Svarvida)[117] He is the abode of bliss is beautifully expressed in the following Rk,

> Vāyo na vrksam suplāśamāsadantsomāsa Indraṁ mandinaścamūṣadah[118]

As birds perch upon the leafy tree, so the manifold bliss filling the 'camas'[119] abides in Indra,

The all-pervasiveness of Indra is very vividly described. He is the lord (Īśa), the highest god (Devatama) and the god of gods (Devah devasya) He is of various forms (Visvarūpa) He is manifested in every object (Pratimānam satah satah)

In the Veda Indra is described as the maker of *rta* (Rtam krnvam) and its protector (Rtapāh) Relation of Indra with *rta* is specially explained in RV 6 39.

'Desiring the worlds to be laden with objects of enjoyments,[120] enforcing law and employing the lawful forces, the constrainer of law has destroyed the powerful enmassed obstructions and subdued the impure activities Controlled by

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109 RV 1 7,10, 4 25,7
110 Ibid, 4 17,8
111 Ibid, 1 102,6
112 Ibid, 1 54,3
113 Ibid, 5 30,5
114 RV 3 38 4
115 Ibid, 8 95,7-9
116 Ibid, 10 43,1
117 Ibid, 10 43,1
118 Ibid, 10 43,4
119 The word 'camū' is differently interpreted The ordinary meaning is 'ladle' Yāska while interpreting RV (1,164 3) translates 'camvoh' as between earth and heaven The word 'camas' is variously interpreted in Nirukta XII, 26, where Yāska interprets AV. 10 26,9 with reference to microcosm and macrocosm *Camas* is translated as 'head', and the 'sun'
120 Etymologically the word means source of enjoyment 'Usriyeti Gonām Usrāvino' asyām bhogāḥ usreti ca ' (Nir IV 19)

you, O Indra, the Indu (moon) lighted darksome nights throughout the year at morning and at evening. Him have they established as the day's bright ensign. He made the mornings to be born in splendour. He shone and caused to shine the worlds that shone not. By Ṛta he lighted up the host of mornings. He moves with steeds yoked by eternal order'.[121] The term 'ṛta-yugbhiraśviḥ' is very significant. The word Aśva used here does not mean horse alone. The mythopoeic language on account of its symbology, has multifarious meanings. Aśva translated etymologically means 'all-prevasive' signifying velocity and motion combined, indicating the force in action [122] So the Aśva referred to here in plural stands for the multiplicity of forces These forces of Indra are accompanied with *ṛta*. It is beautifully conceived in the following verse

'In the path of the universal order he has drunk the divine drink and the 'gods' (the forces working in macrocosm as well as microcosm) have put their minds in for Śrī (the symbol of prosperity, beauty and welfare) [123] He establishes order in the working of the universe [124] He protects the law' (Ṛtapāh) [125]

Prof. Max Muller observes that Indra is clearly conceive as a moral being in the following verse. 'Though never findest a rich man to be thy friend' wine swillers despise thee. But when thou thunderest, when thou gatherest, then thou art called like a father.'[126]

In RV. 4.23 8,10 Indra is designated as *Ṛta*[127] and this clearly and significantly shows the absolute relation of *Ṛta* with Indra. Here the power and the powerful are identified It says that Indra "as the eternal law (Ṛta) has varied food that strengthens, the thought of eternal law removes trans-

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121 RV 6 39.2-4.

122 Nir 1 2 27 Aśvaḥ kasmāt Asnute adhvānam Mahāsanobhavatīti va

123 RV 6 44 8 Ṛtasya pathi vedhā apāyi-śriye manānsi devāso akran.

124 Ibid., 2 30.1.

125 RV. 7 20 6

126 Max Müller A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p.287

127 RV 4 23.8 Sāyanācārya says on this, 'Atra ṛtaśabdenendro vāditya vā satyam vā yajño vocyate.

gressions The glory of eternal law arousing and glowing, has opened the deaf ears of living Firm seated are eternal law's foundations; in its fair form are many splendid beauties By holy law they bring us long lasting sustenance By holy law have the rays entered the eternal path. It is Indra who fixes and upholds this eternal law Swiftly moves the might of *Ṛta* and wins the wealth. To *Ṛta* belong the vast deep earth, heaven and milch kine supreme, to *Ṛta* their milk they render [128] In poetic fancy, Indra is conceived as identified with Ṛta, the universal law, because we have the vision of his glory through the perfect working of the nature's laws. RV 10 3,2 describes Indra as the sustainer of the abode of the *Ṛta*. The Vedic poet looking at nature with his penetrating eye transcends the limits of time and perceives the world around him as the act of world creation stretching in eternity, the genesis eternal and the poet also visualised the eternal law of genesis—the *Ṛta*. *Ṛta* is the law of creation, progress and construction and its violation is the violation of the nature's law which leads to destruction and annihilation.

Indra is invoked as Satya at many places in the Rgveda [129] He is to be praised He is to be invoked He is true and strong and is beyond everything [130] He is protector of truth (Satyatatā, RV. 10 3 4) It is very significantly stated in RV 8 2,37 'Yo bhūt somaih satyamadvā', he is the true bliss in divine ecstasy He is the projector of truth (Satyayonih) Truth is his opulence (Satyarādhah) Indra is addressed as Satyarādhah at six places in the Ṛgveda [131] Truth is his strength He is Satyaśuṣmaḥ. "This adoration is offered to the shedder of rain, the self-resplendent, the possessor of the truth of vigour and the mighty; may we be aided, Indra, in this conflict and abide in prosperity bestowed by thee "[132] The word 'Satyaśuṣmaḥ' has been translated as 'one whose vigour is true'. True is the force of Indra, it is not false, it is eternal like the lord himself 'Satya' means real or change-

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128 RV 4 23, 8-10

129. Ibid, 1 29,1, 1 63,3, 2 12,15, 2 15,1, 2. 22,1, 4 21,10; 6 22,1, 6. 45,10, 8. 2,36

130. RV. 8.16.8

131 Ibid, 1 101,8; 4 24,2; 4 29 1, 7 31,2, 10. 29,7; 10 49,11

132. Ibid, 1 51,15

less. He is also called 'Sayasatvan' and 'Satayasya sūnu. So Indra is the projector of Ṛta and Satya. The devas are only extending the action impelled by his law.[133] Indra speeds those, who follow his law.[134] He is supposed to witness everything himself. He hears and sees all things and looks upon the anger of men himself uncontrolled.[135] He is thus requested by the devotees, 'Slay us not for one sin, nor for two, nor for three, nor for many O hero I am afraid of one as terrible, as destroying and such a queller of resistance as thou art [136]

Further Indra is supposed to be the enemy of the ungodly and unrighteous people, 'Thou, Indra, hast punished him who is selfish and does not believe in eternal values [137] He slew with his bolt those who are great sinners and do not regard him [138] 'Thou Indra, a Soma-drinker who are above all, hast destroyed and scattered the assembly which refrains from offering, sharing and participating [139] It would not be out of place to say that such passages may suggest that Indra's thunderbolt is hurled at such people who disregard him and that such people are the asuras who are deprived of all light and are ignorant, they (being the sons of Diti) have a power that is liable to destruction. No doubt the idea is clearly delineated in the Yajurveda in its last chapter that those who disregard the Ātman, go to those demoniac worlds covered with blinding darkness.[140] Further it is said that Indra protects his faithful men and leads them into an ample space, into transcendental awareness and security.[141] They ascend with him to a home in the solar sphere and there drink nectar thrice seven times (figurative use) in the abode of their friend.[142]

A keen study of the Veda would help us to cognize the true nature of Indra. The Indra Sūktas of the Ṛgveda undoubtedly describe Indra as the spirit or force behind all activity in the phenomenal world The unexplainable is sought to be

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133. RV. 10 55,7
134 Ibid.,6 45,16, 18-19
135 Ibid , 8 78,5
136. Ibid , 8 45,34-35
137. Ibid , 1. 131,4
138. RV 2. 12,10
139. Ibid , 8 14,15
140. YV 40,3
141. RV. 8. 47,8
142. Ibid., 8. 69,7

explained in many ways, and this accounts for the varied descriptions and the diverse anthropomorphic characterization of the deity.

The concept of Indra as the power working behind the whole universe is beautifully delineated in the Veda, and still one is led in the philosophical domain by such expressions that refer to Indra as the unexplainable one It is said in the RV. 7.22 6, 'Various descriptions of yourself prevail among human beings Do not be far away from us Do reveal yourself'[143] This mystic tone of the Veda reminds us, at once, of the transcendental statement of the Iśopaniṣad,[144] 'O sun, offspring of Prajāpati, thou lonely courser of the heaven, thou controller and supporter of all, contract thy rays, withdraw thy light. Through thy grace I behold the most blessed form of thine I am indeed he, that being who dwells there'

Most surprising occurrence in the text of the Ṛgveda is the categorical assertion of the identity of Indra and Ātman Both Indra and Ātman are the Devatā of a hymn [145] Here the Devatā is Ātman or Indra and not Ātman and Indra Indra is the spirit, the Ātman behind the macrocosm as well as the microcosm has been most aesthetically described in this hymn which resembles the Vāk sūkta and the self revelation of the Divine Śrīkṛsna in the Bhagavadgītā Indra reveals Himself as the Supreme who is enforcing all activity and is ruling the world and is still beyond it 'The heaven and the earth are not equal even to one fraction of my ownself. Through my glory I ascend beyond the heaven and earth. I support this earth and the heaven Through my lustre make the sun to move One fragment of mine is in the heaven and another is on the earth I am the spirit in the sun that has risen, and am great I am the spirit in the fire that carries oblations for

143 RV 7 22 6 Bhūri hi te savanā mānuṣesu bhūri manīsi havate tvāmit Māre asmanmaghavañjyokkah,

144 Īśāvāsyopaniṣad, Pūṣannekarṣe yama sūrya prājāpatya vyuha raśmin samūha Tejo yatte rūpam kalyāṇatamam tat te paśyāmi yo'sāvasau puruśa so'hamasmi

145 RV 10 119.

the gods. I have drunk Soma.' The clause occurring after every statement is 'Kuvit somasyāpāmiti,' I have drunk Soma This Soma is the bliss of the supreme by which he creates and nourishes the universe. It is said also in the Upaniṣad that from the bliss of Brahman indeed beings are born, they live by bliss and on deceasing they enter into bliss.[146] On a part of just this bliss of Brahman other creatures have their living [147] This ānanda of Brahman is the Soma of Indra, the Brahman in the Veda This is a fundamental principle of Indian philosophy regarding the creation that it was evolved out of the joy of the Supreme and this is what is most wonderfully spoken in the Ṛgveda

Just as it is said in the Puruṣa Sūkta that 'one-fourth of him is all these beings and three-fourth, the imperishable is in heaven,[148] similarly a hymn delineating Indra says that Indra transcends both the worlds in greatness. One-half of him is equal to the earth and the heaven.[149] Indra is the Puruṣa. He is called Purandara. He is the Supreme. The Veda describes Indra as all this, it says that Indra is what is heard (śrutya),[150] Indra is the hearer (śrotā)[151] and Indra is one who sings the praise (śalokī) [152] He is the bliss. He is pure [153] Indra is the Ātman of Sūrya (sūryātmā) that is, he is the Puruṣa, the supreme behind the sun that is visible to us, and Indra is that one in the sun, who is not visible to the naked eye.[154] Indra is also known as the Suparṇātmā,[155] the soul of Suparṇa, which denotes Prajāpati, the sun, the Vāyu and other manifest forms of the supreme. Suparṇa is delineated at length in the Samhitās as well as in the Upaniṣads. Says the Veda that a Suparṇa has entered the ocean. He

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146 Tai U. 3,6,1. Ānando brahmeti vyājānāt. Ānanddhyeva khalvimāni bhūtāni jayante. Ānandena jātāni jīvanti Ānandam prayantyabhisamviśantīti.

147. Bṛ. U. 4,3 32 Eṣo'sya parama ānanda etasyaivānandasyānyāni bhūtāni mātrāmupajīvanti.

148. RV 10.90,3.

149. Ibid., 6.30,1

150. Ibid., 8.46,14

151. Ibid., 6.23,4; 24,2

152. RV. 8.93,8

153. Ibid., 8.95

154. Ibid., 8.6,24,30, 1.83,5, 3.39,7; 8.69,2, 10 55,3; 10.111,7

155. Ibid., 10,55,6

looks around and views this universe.[156] That Suparṇa is one but the wise sages express it differently[157] Thus Suparṇa is the universal soul manifested variously as the cosmos.[158] The Vedas and Upaniṣads speak of the two Suparnas who represent individual soul engaged in joy seeking in the world, and the universal soul who just watches; but both are sitting on the tree of the universe and thus symbolise the qualified Purusa. Indra is the soul of this Suparna[159] From the above discussion Indra's nature is revealed as the supreme power in the macrocosmic and microcosmic existence as well as the concept of the absolute spirit who is beyond and above all phenomena

This truth is furthered in the Āranyakas and philosophically elaborated in the Upanisads.

INDRA IN THE YAJURVEDA

Indra in the Yajurveda, is described as the king of gods, lord of speech, Viśvakarman, sun, Marutvān, god of battles, and deliverer from miseries, Vṛtrahan, representative of the Rājanyas, impeller of rain and lord of the universe Indra can thus be looked at, in the Yajurveda as the presiding power behind different cosmic phenomena, as an anthropomorphic god having superhuman powers of bestowing riches to the people of this world and helping them out of their difficulties Indra is also described here as a god who stays out of our vision and listens to our prayers and helps us to follow the path of Rta. This god Indra is also described as identical with the Supreme One. On the microcosmic lines Indra is described as individual soul within the human body.

156 RV 10.114,4 Eka suparṇaḥ sa samudram āviveśa,
Sa idam viśvam bhuvanam vicaṣṭe.

157 Ibid, 10 114,5
Suparnam viprāḥ kavayo vacobhirekam santam bahudhā kalpayanti

158 Ibid, 10.149,3

159 YV 13 16 Puruṣaḥ suparṇaḥ

160 RV 10 55 6
Śākmanā śāko aruṇaḥ Suparna ā yo mahaḥ Śūraḥ sanādanīlaḥ
Yacciketa satyamit tanna mogham vasu sparhamuta jetota dātā
and also 10.24,24

The Yajurveda is chiefly related with Yajña, the sacrificial ritual It is the Veda that consists of the Yajus, that is derived from the root √Yaj, to sacrifice and to worship[160] The word 'Yaju' is also derived from √Yā, 'to move' and √Jan, 'to create', meaning the dynamic creative power.[161] The word Yajus derived from √Yuj, to unite[162] indicates all-uniting, all-connecting and all pervading reality So the word Yaju means sacrifice, as well as all-connecting and all-pervading reality, that is twofold—Prāna and Puruṣa.

The word Yajña signifies a sacrifice as well as the deity to whom the sacrifice is offered, when the word is derived from Yaj to sacrifice and to worship.[163] The word Yajña in its dynamic sense means the creative reality.[164] The cosmic Puruṣa or Brahman is conceived as Yajña[165] from which originated all this creation[166]

Thus the words Yaju and Yajña signify much more than simple ritualistic performance and the Veda of Yajus deals with sacrifice, the deity of the sacrifice, the creation, the creative forces, the force behind the creative forces and its different aspects and thus presents a dynamic world where we see the gods in a vast perspective. All the gods are extending the sacrifice, i e the work of creation[167] The idea that the myth and the ritual are very closely connected has been stressed by the modern mythists and anthropologists. In fact the archetypal vision that is presented through verbal images in the mythical poetry is dramatized in the act of

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160 S.B. 4 6.7,13. Yajo ha vai nāmaitadyajuriti
Nir. 7,3,9. Yajuryajate yajateḥ dhātoḥ

161. S.B. 10 3 5,2 Eṣa hi yannevedam sarvam janakhyetam yantamidamanuprajāyate

162. Ibid., 10 5,2,20 Yajurityeṣa puruṣa hidam sarvam yunakti.
Ibid., 14,8,14,2
Prāṇo vai yajuḥ prānai imāni sarvāṇi bhūtāni yujyante.

163 RV. 10.90,16.

164. S.B. 3.9.4, 23.

165. Ibid, 5.3 2,4. Brahma hi yajñaḥ.

166. T S 5 2 5,1 Puruṣo vai yajñastenedam sarvam mitam.

167. RV 10 90,5, YV. 31.15

ritual. Myth and ritual are both symbolic For instance the priciple of complementary dualism presented through the mythical symbol of Dyāvāpṛthvī, the two Aśvins and Indrāvaruṇā are presented as two logs of wood in the ritual to Agni In the Yajurveda Indra is eulogised as the cosmic Puruṣa and on the analogy of the Purusa hymn occurring in the Ṛgveda and repeated in this Veda all the gods are described as forming the different parts of the body of Indra[168] The wise people weave this principle (tantra) strongly through contemplation like the weaving with lead the thread of wool[169] That is, they found out the oneness, the unity What was told in the Nāsadīya Sūkta is retold here 'The wise found out in their heart the binding thread of the existent and the non-existent through contemplation and meditation '[170] In this Veda also it is said when the wise ones tried to twine that unifying principle they did it through perceiving all the gods and the sacrificial rite as the limbs of the one, who is named Indra here

Since the sacrificial ritual had developed and become complex in the Yajurveda, therefore the ritualistic symbolism in the Yajurveda appears to be more intricate than the ritualistic symbolism found in the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Ṛgveda But inspite of these complexities of expression the fundamental concept has not been rendered too obscure to be understood

In YV. 19 80-9ˆ, we find the transfiguration of Indra as creation delineated through sacrificial symbolism. The process of the creation of the world is dealt with as one of a transformation from Indra, the Cosmic Person. The other gods are conceived of as the active agents functioning in the process of formation The process is portrayed as one similar to

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168 YV 19 80

169 Uvvata commenting upon YV 19 80 says
Yajñaḥ patena rūpyate prathamāyāmṛci Sisena ūrṇāsūtreṇa ca tantramiva pūrvāparaiḥ sūtairdakṣinottaraiśca vayanti yajñam Ke vyanti Manīṣinaḥ medhāvinaḥ Kavayaḥ krāntadarsanāḥ manasā paryālocya gunata uktvā athedānīm nāmata āha. Aśvinau sarasvatī varunaśca Kimartham puraskṛtya yajñam vayati Indrasya rūpam bhiṣajyan.

170. RV. 10 129,4

the process of conducting a sacrificial rite by many persons. In Puruṣa Sūkta the Cosmic Person was described with heads, eyes, feet, mouth and thighs. The delineation of Indra as the First Being here, however, includes the details of the hair, the skin, the flesh, the bones, the marrow, the lungs, the liver, the gall and the kidneys of that Cosmic Being. It gives also an account of his eyes, eyebrows, nostrils, ears and saliva and rheum The minute details discriminating the hair on his waist and body, the hair forming the beard and locks are also given.

The Yajurveda presents Indra here in the universal form. An attempt is made to give a visible form to the abstract metaphysical truth and the task is not very easy The simple form of language would not express it, so it is conceived metaphorically as the cosmic universal body and expressed symbolically as a ritual of worship Thus Indra is the eternal spirit who is presented in its bodily form in the Yajurveda He is none else but the concept of the totality or the one supreme presented through ritualistic symbolism.

Next, we find Indra in the Yajurveda as a god whom devotees pray and request for vigour, strength and riches.[171] Indra is invoked to come with favours [172] The devotee in his heart has pictured Indra as the rescuer and the helper who listens at each invocation Indra is the bounteous lord, who is called upon to come and bless.[173] In the prayers one finds the awakening of wonder and longing for the transcendent.

These prayers to Indra are characterized by twofold requests, firstly for favours of various types and secondly for protection from foes, enemies and the evil elements.[174]

He is invoked along with Agni, Brahmā and Bṛhaspati to guard the sacrifice.[175] Indra is the god of vigour, the word 'indriya 'means 'vigour' and so the devotee prays, 'May Indra give me Indriya, the vigour and may all riches and the rich

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171 YV 3 13

172. YV. 20 49

173 Ibid., 20.50 Trātāramindramavitāramindram have have suhavam sūramindram Hvayāmi śakram puruhūtamindram svasti no maghavā dhātvindraḥ

174 Ibid., 20 51-52

175. Ibid., 18 76

ones approach me.[176] Prayers of this nature are abundantly found Indra is at the same time, as told before a good deliverer—Sutrāman [177]

Through sacrificial rites, prayers and the eulogical songs the devotees wish to please Indra. It is clearly said that the sacrificial rites are for the sake of the joy of the deity. 'Approach, O Indra, the prayer; in our libations take delight. May Indra, the Vṛtra-slayer, good guardian accept the Soma-wreath' that symbolises the joy of the divine [178] Along with other offerings, strength, personified as bull (Indriya Ṛsabha), is offered to Indra.[179] Indra is invoked in the morning. Says YV 20 39, kindled in forefront of morning is Indra.[180] Indra's seat is in the eastern direction of the sacrifice 'May Indra, lord of all-pervasive forces, sit by direction eastward on earth accepting our oblation '[181] To the strong Indra go the sounding portals, dames with a goodly husband, swiftly moving Let the well mannered, divine and wide doors expanding in their glory be opened for Indra, the hero [182] With this exalted picture of god, the worshipper invokes Indra for prosperity, protection and defence The worlds depend upon Indra [183]

Another picture of Indra that is sketched here is that of a hero, whom the men have as if in their midst and who is constantly infusing them with inspiration 'Great, hero like, controlling men is Indra, unwasting in his powers, doubled in wasteness He turned to us, has grown to leading vigour, broad and wide, he has been decked by those who serve him. He is the great king called Mahendra '[184] He is visualised as fighting along with the warriors whom he unites together and guards and protects 'With Indra who is roaring, ever watchful, victor, hard to overthrow, winner of battles, you warriors

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176 YV , 2 10

177 YV , 10 31,19,1

178 Ibid , 20 89,90

179 Ibid , 21,40 Ṛṣabhamindrāya simhāya sahasa indriyam svāhā. On this says Uvvata', 'Kim bhūtamṛṣabham Indriyam indriyatmakamiti'

180 Ibid , 20 30

181 Ibid , 20,39

182 Ibid , 20,40

183 YV. 20.32

184 Ibid , 7.39

now conquer and vanquish in the combat. Indra is queller of stalls, the winner of progress, knowledge or light or earth (govid) Armed with thunder he shatters an army and with his might destroys it. Follow him brothers. Getting ready like heroes, and like Indra show your zeal and courage[185] So Indra is conceived as a hero. Indra was to the Vedic warriors what Kṛṣṇa was to the epic warriors appears from these eulogical delineations The slaying of Vṛtra by Indra is no new story In fact Vṛtrahā has become a synonym of Indra and drinking of Soma is also a famous trait of his personality. 'Indra chose Soma in fight with Vṛtra and in fight with Vṛtra Soma chose Indra,'[186] is a beautiful eulogy of Soma for it was chosen by the god of gods, the hero, to face his difficult encounter with Vṛtra 'Sing the lofty hymn to that Indra, who slayed Vṛtra best.'[187] Indra is surrounded by Maruts who assist him in facing the enemy So says this Veda, 'Here drink the Soma, Indra girt by Maruts[188]

Indra in association with Maruts is beautifully set forth. 'The bestower of wishes, whose strength had waxed, whom Maruts follow, free giving Indra, the celestial ruler, mighty, all conquering, the giver of victory, him we invoke to give us new protection.[189] Indra, accordant with the banded Maruts, drink Soma O Vṛtra-slayer, slay our foemen, drive away assailants, and make us safe on every side.[190] Not only do Maruts give him assistance but all the gods help Indra 'With three and thirty gods, the Thunderweilder, smote Vṛtra's head and threw the portals open '[191]

Vṛtra, 'the obstruction', may mean a cloud or darkness with reference to the different aspects of Indra's personality. The

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185. YV , 17 34, 38
Saṅkrandenā'nimiṣena jiṣnunā yutkāreṇa duścyavanena dhṛṣṇunā.
Tadindreṇa jayata tatsahadhvaṁ yudho nara iṣuhastena vṛṣṇā.
Gotrabhidam govidam vajrabāhum jayantamajma pramṛṇan-
tamojasā
Imaṁ sajātā anu vīrayadhvamindram sakhāyo anusamrabhadhvam.

186. Ibid., 1 13
187 Ibid , 20 30
188 Ibid., 7 35
189 Ibid , 7.36
190. Ibid , 7.37
191 Ibid., 20.36

domain of rain is attributed to him, at the same time, he is also spoken of as identical to the sun. 'Indra is great in his power and might, and like Parjanya rich in rain.'[192] Passages displaying this aspect of Indra's personality are many. Indra is the sun-god is clear from the following verse, 'As he was rising up they all revered him; self-luminous, he travels, clothed in splendour. That is the Bull's, the Asura's lofty nature, the omniform has reached the eternal waters.[193] In the passage that follows, Indra, the Vṛtra-slayer, is addressed as sun 'Whatever, Vṛtra slayer, you Sūrya have risen today. That 'Indra' all is in your power.'[194] So, Indra is the slayer of Vṛtra signifying that he, as the god of rain, destroys the water-imprisoning clouds and as the sun-god he destroys the world-enveloping darkness Indra is also the killer of Namucī (YV 19 71) Indra's identity with Viśvakarman is set forth in a prayer to that god :

'Let us invoke today to aid our labour, the lord of speech, the thought-swift Viśvakarman May he hear kindly all our invocations, who gives all bliss for aid, whose works are righteous. Who is self-supported For Indra, Viśvakarman, this is the home.'[195] Indra is the Viśvakarman because he is the propelling force for all activity.

It makes in fact no real difference if Indra is called by one name or the other because ultimately all the powers and all the gods are said to be residing in Him [196]

INDRA IN THE SĀMAVEDA

The Sāmaveda is the Veda of Śāmans (melodies) meant for singing. 'Of the 1810 or, if we subtract the repetitions, 1549

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192 YV , 7 40

193 Ibid , 33 22
Ātiṣṭhantam pari visve abhūṣaśriyo vasānaścarati svarociḥ
Mahattadvṛṣno asurasya nāmā viśvarūpo amṛtāni tasthau
Waters are the eternal waters (Amṛtāni jalāni) says Mahidhara, 'the forces of eternity', according to Roth

194 Ibid , 23 35

195. Ibid , 8,45

196. Ibid , 28

verses, which are contained in the two parts together, (Pūrvārcikā and Uttarārcikā) all but 75 are also found in the Ṛgveda Samhitā, and mostly in books VIII and IX of the latter'[197] The Śāmans are sung on a particular stanza. According to the Vedic theologians the melody has originated out of the stanza (Ṛk) which is called the 'Yoni', i.e. "the womb," of the melody (Sāman).[198] The Jaiminīya Mīmāṁsā Sūtra also says that the tune or melody is known as Sāmana (Gīṭṣu sāmākhyā)[199] and this is to be sung on a Ṛk, so the Ṛks were adopted to certain melodies and this collection was named the Sāmaveda. This Veda is considered to be devotional in nature in contrast to the Rgveda, the Yajurveda and the Atharvaveda, which are regarded dealing with knowledge (jñāna), ritual (karma) and science (vijñāna) respectively. So the Sāmaveda is the Veda of devotional songs or to put it in other words in the Samaveda the Rks are sung in devotional melodies which are elaborately dealt in the texts on Śikṣā like the Nāradīya Śiksā etc

The Sāmaveda does not provide any fresh material for our present investigation Even this is thought that 'the seventy-five verses which do not occur in the Ṛgveda, are partly found in other Saṁhitās, partly in various works on ritual, some may be taken from a recension unknown to us, but some are only pieced together out of sundry verses of the Ṛgveda.'[200] But it must be pointed out that the different spirit of this Veda helps us to look at the same verses originally belonging to the Ṛgveda, as new. Decked in an apparel of melody and in a fervid setting of the Sāmaveda the same verses seem to have a different import The gods are presented as the gods of the cult of worship Of the Sāmaveda, one section consisting of more than three hundred verses (107-466) occupying the first book (Pūrvārcikā) is devoted solely to Indra and is named

197 Winternitz, M : A History of Indian Literature Vol I p. 164

198 Ṛcyadhyarūḍham sāma gīyate

199. Śabaraswamī commenting upon Mīmāmsā Darsana, 9 27 says Sāmavede sahasram gītyupāyaḥ Āha katame gītyupāyā nāma. Ucyate Gītirnāmakriyā hāmyantaraprayatnajanyā svaraviśeṣānāmabhivyañjika sāmaśabdāpilapyā. Sā niyatapramāṇāyamṛci gīyate.

200. Winternitz, M.. A History of Indian Literature, Vol I p. 194.

Aindra Kāṇḍa Apart from this, many more verses addressed to Indra are included in the last book. (Uttarārcikā) In between these two books the first and the last, there is another very small book consisting of only ten verses which are addressed to Indra alone Indra, the deity of these verses is called the 'Ātman, the lord of the three worlds' (*Indrastrailokyātmā Devatā Prajāpati Ṛṣi*). Thus in the Sāmaveda Indra is delineated as the supreme soul or the cosmic soul with reference to the three worlds The last verse of the Mahānāmnyarcikā says after the deity has been described in the first nine verses, that 'He is so, you, O Agni are also so, O Indra, you are so: O Puṣan, you are so, all you gods, you are so.'[201]

Indra is invoked in about twenty verses out of the seventyfive fresh verses of the Sāmaveda and in these verses Indra is eulogised and prayed Says one Sāman, 'Indra is the unceasing operative agent, he is like a constant attendant, a beneficent divinity worthy to be chosen by all, ever victorious, the supreme lord.'[202] Who among men can satisfy Indra with Soma May he heap wealth upon us '[203] In these prayers also Indra appears as a strong god, for whom Soma is offered and who slays Vṛtra, Namucī and other obstructive forces

'O Indra we come to you with abundant sacrificial offering prepared for you O brave Śakra, in our most solemn rite of worship we come with stores of viands for such a one as you are O Indra the plants of Soma are pressed for you, O possessor of riches, do you satisfy yourself with them. O Indra, tell us by what mode of devotion you bestow wealth. O ever victorious and most awful lord, implant strength in our bodies This Soma, accompanied with sacred hymns is prepared for your delight, O Indra. Drink the pleasant juice, listen to our songs and grant the singer his request, O recipient of praise '[204]

The following one is a beautiful song. It says 'I praise you, the holder of the thunderbolt, who speaks like the

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201. SV. 650
202 Ibid.. 196
203. SV. 190
204. Ibid., 209, 212, 231, 294

god of eloquence, who wears the crown, the possessor of immense wealth, the lord of all, the constant participant in our sacrifice, the dweller in heaven and slayer of the cloud shaped demon Vṛtra. Desirous of circumventing (my enemies) I praise you, the lord supreme, and slayer of foes.'[205] Indra is prayed for his constant protection in encounters with the enemies. Indra inspires his devotee to fight the battle with courage and the devotee also knows that with his and his aid alone he would be successful So the following prayer is addressed to Indra, the source of courage. 'The man who slays us and bestows our goods on others, and who, though a murderous wretch, boasts of his liberality, I will destroy, O Indra either in battle or by my bodily strength This I am determined to execute through your aid, O Supreme lord.'[206]

The two arms of Indra are thus eulogized, when the contest takes place. 'For your aid you seek first Indra's two arms, which are larger, youthful, incapable of being restrained, strong as the world supporting elephant and indomitable, for by them the might of the Asuras was subdued'[207] His heroic deeds are recorded 'He, like a friend, advanced to the front of the battle and slew Vṛtra. He like a hero hewed down the hosts of the Dānavas and as a protector subdued our foes, when he had enjoyed the Soma.'[208]

Other verses also depict Indra in the same way He is the Supreme Lord and in the cult of worship of the Sāmaveda, he is the sole resort to the devotees.

INDRA IN THE ATHARVAVEDA

In the mythical poetry of the Atharvaveda is seen the reality set afire with our own emotions. The mythical concepts, allegories and symbols are interwoven with the human aspirations; the 'gods' here are participating in the daily life of man and are related to the multifarious aspects of his emotional and other needs and their fulfilment.

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205. SV. 327
206. Ibid., 336
207. SV. 1869
208. Ibid., 954

The Atharvaveda imparts the knowledge (veda) of stability and well-being (non-injury)[209] The poetry of Atharvaveda moves around the mythical figures of the Ṛgveda but the perspective is man, his origin, his destiny, his hopes and desires. This Veda is also called 'Chandānsi' which means etymologically the poetry of strength, protection[210] and wish fulfilment.[211] It is the Veda of 'Yogaksema' The subject-matter of the Atharvaveda deals with peace and prosperity of the human society. The ritualism that developed with reference to the Atharvavedic mytholoy relates mainly to the attainment of twofold end, i e. śānti and puṣti [212]

The other name of this Veda is 'Atharvāngirasa' that also reveals the nature of the Atharvavedic hymnology The Gopatha Brāhmana says, 'the Angirasas' stand for '*rasa*', the juice (happiness, bliss, well being) and Atharvāṇas denote the '*Bheṣajam*', the cure (the measures against calamity, evil, ignorance of any kind) The cure itself is immortality and the immortality is the supreme knowledge (Brahma) '[213] So this Veda is also called the Brahmaveda

We find here a synthesis between the reality and the dream world, the practical and the ideal, the earth and the heaven Says Sāyaṇācārya in the beginning of his commentary (Bhāṣyam) on the Atharvaveda that he having explained the three Vedas which yield fruit in the world beyond this, now proceeds to explain the fourth Veda that promises fruition in this as well as in the other world.

So in the Atharvaveda we find the archetypal symbols of

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209 Durgācārya on Nir. II 2 6 and Fateh Singh, Vedic Etymology p 36

210 √Chādir Ūrjane
√Chadir Samvarane
√Chad apavārane

211 chandānsi vai sarve stomāssarve devāssarve lokāssarve kāmāḥ

212 Paurohityam Śāntipauṣṭikāni rājñām
Atharvavedena kārayed brahmaivañca

213 G B 3 4
Ye'ṅgirasaḥ sa rasaḥ Ye atharvānastad bheṣaja tadm amṛtam. Yadamṛtam tad brahma

the metaphysical poetry of the Ṛgveda translated in the daily life of man In the Yajurveda, they are operative in the ritualistic world, coming down to the Atharvaveda they are participating in man's struggle for existence and are very near to life.

In the Atharvaveda also, Indra is celebrated as the highest lord He is repeatedly requested to grant freedom from sin, trouble and grief Ath IV,24 is a hymn of praise and prayer to Indra. 'I think of Indra, only him for ever, the slayer of Vṛtra May these prayers of mine go to him He comes to the pious offerer's calling May he deliver us from sin Who with strong arms overcame his strong opponents, who broke and crushed the power of the demons, who has controlled the rivers and the regions, may he deliver us from sin. He is ruler of men, finder of light and the hero. The singers'[214] declare his valour. Of sweetest sacrifice with seven Hotṛs, may he deliver us from sin, under whose control are being furthered the best forces [215] All the luminaries are moving on account of that highest light and knowledge For whom flows this bright juice purified by devotion, may he deliver us from grief and trouble Whose favour they desire who have tasted the juice of divine ecstacy, whom, the possessor of forces or arrows (Iṣumantam . Iṣu, īśate gatikarmāṇaḥ or vadhakarmāṇaḥ, Nirukta 9.14), men invoke in their prayers. On whom the sun depends. On whom depends all power. His first manifestation was for the enforcement of all activity (karma-kṛtyāya) The valour of him, the first one is recognised. Whose bolt is raised to encounter all trouble, he, the strong lord, the controller leads the hosts to meet for battle. He is the giver of twofold wealth (earthly and ethereal). I, a suppliant, praise and ever call on Indra. May he deliver us from grief and sin'

This hymn of the Atharvaveda affirms that Indra is the lord of everything He is the controller of all operation. It

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214. Nir. 9.5 Grāvāṇaḥ, grāvāno hanterva gṛṇāterva.
The word 'Grāvān is' derived from √gṛ in the above translation
215. 'Yasya vaśasa ṛṣabhasa ukṣaṇaḥ' Nir. 12 5. derives '*Ukṣaṇaḥ* as *Ukṣatervṛddhikarmaṇaḥ*.

is his power, that sets everything astir. The Atharvaveda[216] further sings his glory as 'whose delightful light is extended for the destruction of enemies or for protection (tuje).[217] O men, endeavour to attain the ample, divine and ecstatic (Rantyam)[218] lusture of Indra. He is the bold one whose overpowering might the boldest has never defied. Unassailable are Indra's wrath, fame and force. May he bestow on us that illuminating (rayimuruṁ piśṅgasaṁdrśam)[219] wealth. He is the mightiest lord among men'

He is the greatest protector He protects from every side. 'May Indra the preserver, the killer of Vṛtra, the furtherer and the adorable one protect us from the centre and from west and eastward [220] Rouse us today, O Indra, Maghavan with your best possible protective measures May he who hates us fall low beneath us, and him whom we detest let life abandon '[221] The preceding prayer addressed to Indra is like a spell but magic and literature meet in a myth In the words of Richard Chase, "when objects and qualities become efficacious by being fused with power, they are subject to the compulsive techniques of magic" Besides being a compulsive technique—a pseudo-science, as Frazer says, magic is obviously an aesthetic activity. Magic is immediately available to art and art to magic Primitive literature is shot through with magic and we may regard it as mythical when it fortifies the magical view of things, when it reaffirms the viberant dynamism of the world, when it fortifies the ego with the impression that there is magically potent brilliancy in the world Myth is not vaporous, abstract or unreal, it is a "blaze of reality".[222] Accord-

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216 AV 6 33

217. √Tuja hiṁsāyām pālane ca. Gavādiḥ, Asmāt sampadādilakṣno bhāve kvip

218. Rantināmāsi divyo gandharvaḥ iti (T A 4 11 5), tatra bhavamjyotiḥ rantyam

219 Piśaṅgasamdṛśam pītavarṇābham varṇaprakarṣayuktam utarṣtam kāñcanam ityarthaḥ, Sāyaṇa.

220 AV. 19 15.3 221. Ibid , 7, 31

222. "Notes on the study of myth."

ing to Anand K. Coomaraswami, 'what anthropologists describe empirically, as 'sympathetic magic' is a metaphysical operation, an enchantment and a conjuration, not a religious, devotional service or prayer.'[223]

As in other Saṁhitās, in the Atharvaveda Indra's help is sought to destroy the enemies, 'Handless be every foeman who assails. They who with missiles come to fight against us, dash them together with great slaughter, O Indra, and let their sinful chief be pierced with arrows. Indra and Pūṣan have gone forth along the ways on every side Today those hosts of enemies must be bewildered far away. Those foes, come hitherward dismayed like serpents when their heads are gone. Let Indra slay each bravest one of you led astray by Agni.'[224] Many such prayers of the nature of charms are found in the Atharvaveda Such charms are to affect the removal of enemies. In one of the hymns of the Atharvaveda Indra is even requested to grant a wife to the worshipper.

'Great, Indra, is that hook of thine bestowing treasure, wrought of gold.

Therewith, O Lord of might, bestow a wife on me who long to wed'[225]

Further Indra is invoked as the greatest king and the lord of everything[226]

'Indra be victor, never to be vanquished, to reign among the kings, as sovran ruler.

Here you come for praise and supplication, to be revered and waited on and worshipped.

You fain for glory, an imperial ruler, have won dominion over men, O Indra.

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223 The transformation of nature in Art. p. 125.

224 AV 6 66, 1-2, 67, 1-2

225 Ibid , 6 82, 3
Yaste'ṅkuso vasudāḍo vṛhannindra hiraṇyayaḥ,
Tena janīyate jāyām dhehi Śacīpate.

226 Ibid , 6. 98, 1-3

Of these celestical tribes be you the sovran; long lasting be your sway and undecaying.

You govern the north and eastern regions, Indra, fiend slayer, you destroy the foemen.

You have won all, for as the rivers wander, Bull, called to help on our right hand you go'.

Indra is the source of strength. Indra is addressed as Vasu, the impeller of wealth and light of life (Vasuriti prāṇa-nāma). 'Thy downward paths from heaven, whereby you inspire all the world with life, give us in gracious love or happiness[227] With the aid of Indra, the Illuminating, may we subdue our enemies and overcome all obstructions'.[228]

No new symbol is employed to describe Indra's acting power which is conceived anthropomorphically as the two arms of Indra fighting all battles, protecting all beings and imparting welfare, happiness, security and light.

'These two sturdy wish-fulfilling arms of Indra, these that are wonderous, mighty and successful

First when the need arises will I employ them by which the heaven of Asuras was conquerred'.[229]

Other verse says . 'Arrows with hundred points, unconquerable, are this Indra's mighty arms in war'.[230]

Indra is protecting from all sides : 'May he from outmost point be our protector, and from the centre and from west and eastward'.[231]

Most of the Indra Sūktas occurring in the nineteenth and the twentieth books of the Atharvaveda are taken from the Rgveda Samhitā Between the Indra Sūktas of the Atharvaveda and the Indra Sūktas of the Ṛgveda there is materially no difference in the nature of the deity, but in the Atharvaveda in the hymns which are related to other subjects Indra is differently pictured on account of his association with those subjects. For example in the Atharvaveda VII.50, Indra is associated with dice and invoked to bestow victory in that game.

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227. AV. 7, 57, 2
228 Ibid , 7, 92, 1
229. Ibid , 11 93 1
230. AV. 20.51.4
231 Ibid , 19.15 3

'As evermore the lightning flash strikes, irresistible, the tree. So irresistible may I conquer the gamblers with the dice, from every side, from hale and sick, impotent to defend themselves. May all the fortune of the folk as winnings pass into my hands With you to aid us may we win the treasure; do you assist our side in every battle. Give us wide scope and easy way, O Indra Break down, O Maghavan, the foe-men's valour.'[232]

In the Veda of wish-fulfilment (chandānsi) Indra is helping the human being in achieving success in his daily struggle for life He remains the mighty figure who alone can help in any kind of strife, struggle and battle and lead one to victory. He is the eternal source of strength.

Thus the above account gives a glimpse of Indra in the Atharvaveda Now after having viewed Indra in the four Saṁhitās we proceed to meet Varuna, another great character of the Vedic mythology.

VARUNA IN THE ṚGVEDA

Varuṇa is indeed one of the greatest Devatās of the Ṛgveda even though he is celebrated only in ten hymns exclusively.'[233] Four images of Varuṇa vividly appear before us as we go through the hymns of the Ṛgveda These are Varuna as a universal monarch and the lord of the sky, as the controller of the cosmic law (Rta), as related to waters (Āpaḥ) and Varuṇa as related to Māyā The Ṛgveda 1.24,6-10, portrays Varuṇa beautifully:

'The regal Varuna of pure vigour (abiding) in the baseless (fermament) sustains on high a heep of light, the rays (of which) are pointed downwards while their base in above; may they become concentrated in us as the sources of existence. The regal Varuṇa verily made wide the path of the sun, (by

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232. RV. 7.50, 1-2, 4
233. Ibid , 1.24-25 II, 28. V. 85 VII. 86-89 VIII. 41-42. Twentythree hymns of the Ṛgveda are addressed to Mitrāvaruṇā, nine to Indra and Varuṇa. Though we do not find any hymn addressed to Varuṇa in Xth maṇḍala yet there are isolated references to Varuṇa in about 35 hymns of the same maṇḍala.

which) to travel on his daily course, a path to traverse in pathless; may he be the repeller of all agony Your O king, are a hundred and thousand medicaments; may your favour, comprehensive and profound, be (with us) keep afar from us the evil (*Nirrti*) with unfriendly looks, and liberate us from whatever sin we may have committed These constellations placed on high, which are visible by night, and go elsewhere by day, are the undisturbed holy acts of Varuna and by his command the moon moves resplendent by night

Varuna is omnipresent and omnicient. He actively moving in the world and surrounded by his spies observes the deeds of men and all others His palace has thousand gates and he sits on a golden throne His face is that of Agni and sun is his eye His hands are beautiful. Of course the description of the person of Varuna is figurative The golden throne placed in thousand-gated palace suggests uninterrupted movement and knowledge

> Thy realm, O Varuna, thy might and anger,
> Even these winged birds have not attained to,
> Nor yet the waters that go on for ever,
> Nor (mountains) that obstruct the wind's wild fury

He is all embracing, nothing can escape him He knows the course of the action of all beings RV (1 25) says, 'He knows the path of the birds flying through the air He, abiding in the ocean, knows also the course of ships He who accepting the rites dedicated to him knows the twelve months and their productions and that which is supplementary He knows the path of the vast, the graceful and the excellent wind, and who knows those who reside above He, Varuna, the accepter of holy rites and the doer of good deeds, has sat down among the divine progeny, to exercise supreme dominion over them Through him, the sage beholds all the marvels that have been or will be wrought May that very wise son of Aditi, keep us, all our days, in the right path, and prolong our lives'

Varuṇa's ordinances are repeatedly mentioned and Varuṇa

is the firm supporter of these laws :

> For on thee, undeceivable one are founded,
> As on a mountain, ordinances unshaken "[234]

Varuna possesses a fountain of Ṛta The ordinances of Varuṇa are explicated by the terms Rta and Vrata and the meanings of these words and their mutual relation need clarification

In the great St Petersburg Dictionary, the world Vrata is derived from the root √Vṛ (to choose) and the important meanings of the word according to that dictionary are (1) will, command, law, prescribed order, (2) subservience, obedience, service, (3) domain, (4) order, regulated succession, realm, (5) calling, office, customary activity, carrying on, custom, (6) religious duty, worship, obligation, (7) any undertaking, religious or ascetic performance or observance, vow, sacred work, (8) vow in general and fixed purpose Scholars have derived this word from other roots as well such as √Vṛ to protect (Max Muller) √Vṛ to proceed' (Whitney supported by Prof V M. Apte) Prof Kane says, 'I derive the word from the root √Vr (to choose) From this root comes the word 'Vara' (bridegroom) who is chosen from among several men by a maiden or her guardian, which occurs in RV IX 101.14. and X 85 8. and 9 Choosing involves willing or volition on the part of the person choosing Hence Vṛ also means 'to will'. Therefore when the word Vrata is derived from 'Vṛ' with the suffix 'ta' the meaning of Vrata can be "what is willed" or simply 'will'. The will of a person in power or authority is a command of law unto others Devotees believe that gods have laid down certain commands to be followed by themselves as well as by all beings 'Thus comes the sense of law or ordinance.' A command of a superior imposes or implies a corresponding duty to obey. When commands are obeyed or duties are performed in the same way for long, they become patterns of obligations i e. customs or practices. When persons believe or feel that they must perform certain acts as ordained by gods, then arises the sense of religious worship or duty. If a man imposes

234. RV 2 28 8
Tve hi kam parvate śritānyapracyutāni dulabhavratāni.

upon himself certain restrictions as to his behaviour or food to win the favour of gods that becomes a sacred vow or religious observance.'[235] Thus the several meanings of the word 'Vrata' are : command or law, obedience or duty, religious or moral practices, religious worship or observance, sacred or solemn vow of undertaking, then any vow or pattern of conduct We suppose the word Vrata is used in these senses in the Ṛgveda specially in the Varuṇa hymns. Prof Apte, however, has advanced the theory that there are two parallel phases of the semantic evolution of the word 'Vrata' viz., a 'divine phase' and a 'human phase' and there are six shades of the meaning of word Vrata in its divine aspect, viz (i) Turning round, passage, procedure, physical activity, (ii) circular path, settled or beaten route, (iii) sphere or region of movement or influence, (iv) routine, laws of movement, periodic appearance or visit, customary activity, recurring march, (v) victorious advance of strength, (vi) ordinance, law and rule or code of conduct In its 'human phase' it means (i) physical activity (as distinguished from mental), duty, profession, (ii) the sum total of those peculiar ethical and religious duties and practices which made up the culture pattern of Aryans, (iii) the specific social and religious duties of the three classess of the Aryan society and (iv) devotion to duty in general on the part of men and women Thus 'Vrata' has very extensive scope and Varuna is the holder of this dynamic Vrata Varuna's law is obeyed by gods as well as by human beings so the word 'Vrata' occurring in the Varuṇa hymns embraces all the above mentioned meanings coming under these two categories—divine phase and the human phase The cosmic and the ethical order of Varuṇa is beautifully delineated in these verses.

The Āitya distributed the waters,
The rivers follow Varuṇa's holy order,
As from a bond release me from transgression,
May we swell, Varuṇa thy spring of order (ethical),
May no thread break as I weave my devotion,
Nor mass of work before the time be shattered.[236]

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235 Kane, P V . History of Dharmaśāstra, Vol. V. Part I, p. 5.
236. RV. 2. 28.4-5

According to V S. Apte some meanings of Ṛta are: proper, right, honest, true, a fixed or settled rule of law, sacred custom, pious action, divine law, divine truth and absolution But the word Ṛta means 'order' in general and as is seen in RV. II 28 it means cosmic as well as ethical order.[237] Oldenberg says that Ṛta is in many ways similar to Confucious idea of order, harmony and absence of disturbance and is unquestionably the best concept that has been elaborated by the Aryans. The events of nature do not occur at random but an unvarying pattern.

The word Dharman, according to P V Kane, means 'religious rites or sacrifices' and in the Ṛgveda sometimes Dharman is masculine and often an adjective, meaning 'upholder or sustainer' as in RV. I 187 1 and X 92 2 In X. 21.3 (Tve dharmāṇā āste) the word is masculine In other cases it is obviously in the neuter gender as in I 22 18 (ato dharmāni dhārayan), V 26 6, and IX 6 4 I. In these passages the meaning seems to be 'religious rites or sacrifices', thus approaching Vrata in one of its senses In I 164 43, 50 and X 90.16 sacrifices are said to be primeval dharmans, vide also 'prathama dharmā' in RV III.17 1 and 'Sanatā dharmāṇi in III. 3 I In some cases this sense of Dharman would not do, as in IV 53 3 and V 63 7 where the meaning seems to be 'fixed principles or rules of conduct ' In some cases Dharman appears to mean almost the same thing as Vrata For example, in VII 89 5 the sage says, 'when we destroy or violate your dharmans through heedlessness or infatuation, do not harm us, O Varuṇa, on account of that sin', which is just the same as RV II.25.1, where we have 'Vratam' for dharmāṇi In VI. 70 I, it is said, 'heaven and earth never decaying and endowed with plenty of seed, are held firmly apart by the Dharman of Varuna'. In VIII 42.3 making the heaven firmly fixed is described as one of the vratas of Varuṇa. Speaking generally, Ṛta is the cosmic order, that has been there from the most ancient times. Vrata means the laws and ordinances supposed to be laid down by all gods or by individual gods. Dharman meant religious rites or sacrifices or fixed

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237 Apte's Sanskrit-English Dictionary Part I. Vide the word Ṛta.

principles.[238] All these three statutes Ṛta, Vrata and Dharman are asscoiated with Varuṇa who is the ordainer of these, Varuṇa is called Ṛtvan as he guides the moral order He is Pūtadakṣa; his will is pure From the hymns addressed to Varuna it seems that at the time of the Ṛgveda, Aryans had the conception of the holy will of God viz , the law of righteousness prevailing the world-order The courses of sun, moon and stars are all following the regulations (vratāni) of Varuṇa.[239]

Varuna alone, or with Mitra is often called a king (Rājā)[240] He is the ruler of gods as well as men Varuṇa is also called a universal monarch (Samrāj) though this title is ascribed to Agni and Indra also Sovereignty (Kṣatra) is also attributed to Varuṇa in a predominant fashion. He is called a ruler (Ksatriya), an epithet applied to Varuna in four of its five occurrences He is also known as an independent ruler (Svarāj)[241] Varuna's sovereignty pervades both physical and the moral domains[242]

Varuna's cosmic activity is described in such passages as the following '

'He has extended the firmament over the tops of the trees, has given strength to horses, milk to cows and determination to the heart, he has placed fire in the waters, the sun in heaven and the Soma plant in the mountain. Varuna has set free the water of the downward opening cloud for the heaven, the earth, and the firmament, thence is he the monarch of all the worlds, watering the soil as the rain bedews the barley Varuṇa waters earth, mid-air and heaven, when he pleases to send forth the milk of the cloud, thereupon the mountains clothe their summits with the rain cloud, and the heroes (Maruts), exalting in their strength, compel the clouds to relax I proclaim this great Māyā of the renowned Varuṇa, the destroyer of the Asuras, who, abiding in the mid-heaven has meted the firmament by the sun, as it by a measure.'[243]

This order impelled by Varuṇa in the cosmos cannot be disregarded by any body, His power works uninterrupted,

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238. Kane, P.V. History of Dharmaśāstra Vol V Pt I, pp 20-21.
239 RV 1 24,10
240 Ibid , 7 87 6
241 Ibid , 1 28,1
242. Ibid , 1 25 10
243. Ibid., 5 85, 2-5

'No one has counteracted the devices of the most sagacious divinity, whereby the lucid water-shedding rivers do not fill the ocean with water '[244]

In the hymns of Varuṇa where we find a fully developed idea of law, the conception of sin is apparently present. The transgression of the law of Varuṇa is a sin, vide:

> Whatever wrong against heavenly race we do
> Being but men, O Varuna, whatever law
> Of thine we may have broken through thoughtlessness,
> For that transgression do not injure us, O God.[245]

Moreover, a person does not willingly do a sin A human being striving hard to attain the highest ethical standards may commit a sin, as 'to err is human' Thus we find here the most reasonable approach to the violation of moral law; realization of one's weaknesses and repentance may improve a person but with the favour of Varuna the God of law, vide.

'It is not our own choice, Varuna, but our condition (that is the cause of our sinning) it is, that which is caused by intoxication, wrath, gambling and ignorance; there is senior in the proximity of the junior, even a dream is provocative to sin '[246]

'Opulent and pure Varuna, if through infirmity I have done what is contrary (to the law), yet grant me happiness, possessor of wealth, grant me happiness '[247]

Thus sin originates from thoughtlessness, weakness of will, wine, anger, dice, bad precedence and evil dreams Moreover, it is also suggested that one may be responsible for the sins of other people specially for the sins of one's ancestors.[248]

It is clear from the hymns addressed to Varuṇa that he is a merciful god. The worshipper, though conscious of the violation of law seeks Varuna's grace, favour and forgiveness Varuṇa has weapons to destroy the sinner[249] but he also has a thousand remedies

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244 RV 5 85 6
245 Ibid , 7.89,5
246 Ibid , 7 86 d
247 RV 7,89,3
248 Ibid , 5 86 5
249. Ibid., 1 41,8

A hundred are thy remedies, a thousand,
Wide be thy grace and deep, O sovereign ruler;
Far, far away from us drive off destruction,
And make us free from every sin committed.

RV. VII, 88 says that Varuṇa will not pardon even the sin of his ardent devotee, but when the god is happy he grants protection and happiness to his worshippers. He grants protection (RV II. 28.3, VII 88.6; VII. 42.2), dispels fear (II 28 6,10), delivers from thieves, wolves and inauspicious dreams (II 28 10)

Varuna is the ethical ruler and one can have a glimpse of Vedic ethics in the Varuna Sūktas We come across such prohibitive statements on the part of Varuṇa as not to kill, not to curse, not to deceive,[250] not to gamble[251] not to revel in wine, anger and dice and not to be deceitful at gaming.

Varuna's relation with Māyā finds occasional reference Māyā signifies occult power, applicable in a good cause to gods or in a bad sense to demons Māyā stands for incomprehensive creative power or faculty to achieve the wonderful Varuna is called Māyin, the deity that presides over Māyā. Macdonell remarks that Māyā has an almost exact parallel in the English 'craft', which in its old significance meant occult power, magic then skillfulness, art on the one hand and deceitful skill and vile on the other [252] Through Māyā Varuṇa ordains Ṛta, Vrata and Dharma. The world is order. It is a cosmos and not a chaos Each being, animate and inanimate exists in a certain established relation and harmony with the whole cosmic activity. All duties and obligations in some way or the other lead to the realization that the world is an order Says the Veda.

'I glorify the great Māyā[253] of Varuṇa, the strong one, who

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250. RV 2 27,16, 7 65,3, 8 49 3 251 RV 2 29,ç
252 Vedic Mythology, p 24
253 RV 5 85, 5-6
Imāmūṣvāsurasya srutasya mahīm māyām Varunasya pravocām;
Mānenevа tasthivām antarikṣe vi yo mame pṛthivīm sūryeṇa
Imāmū nu kavitamasya māyām mahīm devasya nakirā dadharṣa,
Ekam yadudnā na pṛṇantyenīrāsiñcantīravanayaḥ samudram.

living in the midsky measured as if the earth with the rod in the form of the sun. No one can supress the Māyā of Varuna'. Hymn 41 of the eighth Maṇḍala has beautifully delineated the nature of Varuṇa. Verses 3 and 8 describe the relation of Varuṇa with Māyā. 'Varuṇa has embraced the nights. That wonderful Varuṇa supports the whole universe. The three dawns extend the law of Varuṇa.'[254]

Moreover Varuna is associated with waters and this is highly significant. 'May the waters which are celestical and those which are self produced, those which are proceeding to the ocean and are bright and purifying, preserve me. May those waters in the midst of which king Varuṇa goes, beholding the truth and falsehood of men, which drop sweetness and are bright and purifying preserve me May those waters in which Varuna, Soma and all other gods are exhilerated by food, into which Agni Vaiśvānara has entered, preserve me '[255] Varuṇa is called a hidden ocean (Samudro apicyaḥ) in the RV. 8.41 8. Moreover Mitra and Varuna are both called the strong lords of the sea or the rivers [256]

The relation of Varuna with waters has perplexed scholars who have tried to give various explanations of the process by which Varuna came to be regarded as the regent of the sea. Professor Roth thinks that Varuna in the later times came to be regarded as the god of the sea He says, 'when on the one hand, the conception of Varuna as the all embracing heaven had been established, and on the other hand, the observation of the rivers flowing towards the ends of the earth and to the sea had led to the conjecture that there existed an ocean enclosing earth in its bosom, then the way was thoroughly prepared for connecting Varuṇa with the ocean ' Another side of the affinity between the celestial and oceanic Varuṇa may be expressed in the words of Alexander von Humboldt, which perfectly coincide with the ancient Indian view. 'The two envelopments of the solid surface of our planet, viz, the aqueous and the atmospheric, offer many analogies to each

254 RV, 8.41,3 and 8
355. RV. 7.49, 2-4
256. Ibid., 7.64,2

other, in their mobility, in the phenomena of their temperature; and in the fact that their parts admit of being displaced; the depth both of the ocean and of the atmosphere is unknown to us'[257]

J Muir has also cited Professor Westgaard'[258] who opines that the Zend word 'Varena' corresponds also etymologically on the one hand to the Greek *oὐρανὸς*' and, on the other, to the India Varuna, a name which in the Vedas was assigned to the god who reigns in the furthest regions of the heaven, where air and sea are as it were, blended, on which account he has in the later Indian Mythology become the god of the sea, whilst in the Vedas appears first as the mystic lord of the evening and the night. H D Griswold has explained it thus : 'the great encircling vault of the sky is sometimes 'clothed with light as with a garment', majestic in its repose and calm, the very picture of sovereignty and order Again it is covered with dark rain clouds By day it is traversed by the sun, at night by moon and stars, and Usās displays her beauty in the morning It is the same mighty vault—by hypothesis the same Varuna as originally conceived—that undergoes these magic transformations It is suggestive that the word Māyā 'occult power' is specially used, in connection with such changes In the ten hymns addressed to Varuna Māyā occurs only four times (V 85,5,6 and VIII 41,3,8) and then in hymns which especially emphasize Varuna's connection with water'[259]

Prof Keith remarks that occasionally even in the Rgveda Varuṇa appears connected with the waters of the ocean, to which flow the seven rivers but the ocean is little known in the Rgveda, and his real connection with water is that with the waters of the air, whence comes it, that in the Naighantuka he is remarked as an aerial no less than a celestial god [260]

From the citations given above it is clear that Varuṇa has

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257 Muir, J · Original Sanskrit Texts Vol V p 75

258 Ibid

259. Griswold, H D The religious quest of India

260 Keith, A B · The Religion & Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads, p 27.

been regarded by these scholars originally as the god of the sky who later on became the god of the sea and consequently of the waters The relation of Varuna and waters however has been taxing the scholars as how Varuna the holder of the eternal Ṛta and who stands for night in relation with Mitra, and who is also the regent of the sky could be associated with waters.

The study of the word Āpah and Salilam as used in the Samhitās, the Brāhmanas and the Upanisads reveals, however, that these words i e Āpaḥ and Salilam have an intrinsic import and signify more than simple waters. In the Nāsadīya Sūkta, the Vāk Sūkta and the Hiranyagarbha Sūkta of the Ṛgveda, Āpah and Salila denote the Primeval waters

'The unmanifest concealed within it the formless manifestation. The universe was then indiscriminated in the primeval waters '.[261] These waters are also called the deep waters [262] The waters indicate the principle of Virāj These waters are also referred to as the Great Waters in the Hiranyagarbha hymn; which says 'these waters held the primeval womb and were creaters of Agni symbolizing the cosmic energy or the cosmos itself From these waters arose He, who is the only life of the bright gods and He by His own might looked over the waters which gave strength and lit the sacrifice (or extended the sacrifice of creation)'.[263] These are the primeval waters of the generating energy, which held in their womb the cosmos as well as the lord of the cosmos (Asurekah) who is the unique spirit of all the gods. In the Vāk Sūkta also, Āpah is conceived of as the birth-place of Vāk, who is represented as the creater, sustainer, and destroyer, i e the Supreme Power in the Sūkta. Vāk is delineated as that force by which the gods get going and are sustained That Supreme Power thought of as a female deity has its origin in the waters in the ocean From these descriptions it is clear that these waters are the primeval waters that symbolize the Kārana Brahman, the Brahman with

261. RV. 10.129.3
Tama āsīttamasā gūlmagre'praketam salilam sarvamā idam

262 Ibid , 10 129,1
Ambhaḥ kimāsīd gahanam gabhīram.

263 Ibid., 10 121, 7-8 and 10 82. 5-6

desire to create and since this desire of creation enveloped the Absolute Brahman and presented him as the causal Brahaman so their first and foremost characteristic is to cover (Āvaraṇa); this may illustrate why the lord of these waters is known as Varuṇa (Āvṛṇotyandhakārarūpayā Māyayā). In the Brāhmaṇa literature also the waters are presented as all-pervading energy or power of the Supreme[264] and as the primeval matter called Mahatsalilam with which Brahman creates everything [265] Āpaḥ is also described as the spirit matter endowed with volitional power.[266]

In the above references Āpaḥ, (the primeval matter) are conceived of as the power or Śakti of the Puruṣa. Moreover two stages of these primeval waters or Āpaḥ are delineated. The first one is referred to as the Avyākṛta or Apraketa (unmanifest state in which the Sat and the Asat (the existent and the non existent), the Mūrta and the Amūrta (the one with form and the formless), lie as non-different and an illustration of this is found in the first three verses of the Nāsadiya hymn (Tama āsit tamasā gūramagre aparketam salilam sarvamā idam) The second state is that which could be called as the manifest one which is endowed with movement and all creation

Thus Āpaḥ or Salilam stand for the manifest as well as the unmanifest primeval matter synonymous of Prakṛti or Vāk or Aditi or Virāj. Varuṇa is the presiding deity of these Āpaḥ or Salilam In the Aitareya Br. these Āpaḥ are called the wives of Varuna[267] and the Gopatha Brāhmana states that Virāt is

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264 Go B 1 1 2
Tadyadabravīdābhirvā ahamidam sarmāpsyāmi, Yadidam kiñceti
Tasmādāpo'bhavastadapāmaptvamāpnoti vai sa sarvān kāmān yān kāmayate

S B, 1,1 1 14, 2 1.1 4, 4 5 7.7
Adbhirvā' idam sarvamāptam,

266 S B 6 1,1 10
So'kāmayata ābhyo'dabhyo'dhi prajāyeyeti so'nayātrayyā vidyayā saha prāviśattad āṇḍa samavarttat .

266 Ibid , 11 1,6 1 Āpo havā'idamagre salilamevāsa.
Ta akāmayanta katham na prajāyemahīti.

267, Tai. B. 1.1 3 8 Āpo Varuṇasya patnya āsan.

also Varuṇa's wife.[268] In the later literature the matter in relation to the spirit gets a faminine designation as Prakṛti and Śakti, etc. This is also found in the Veda. The waters are called as 'Devyaḥ' (the powers of god) signifying the primeval matter of which the Adhiṣṭâtṛ Deva (the prime referent) is Varuna. Varuṇa being the presiding deity of Āpaḥ as explained above is significantly called Asura in the Veda In Ṛgveda the 'totality of the godly powers' is named 'Ausratvam',[269] called 'Mahat' that means literally 'the great' but can be equated to the 'Mahāt' of the Sāṁkhya. The presiding deity of the 'Mahadasuratvam' is no wonder called Asura himself It could be assumed on the basis of the above given reference that Varuna might have been known as 'Asuramahat' corresponding to 'Ahuramazda' in the Zend Avesta Etymologically[270] as well as through practised usage 'Asura' denotes the 'powerful',[271] the possessor of the power (Asu) named Māyā or Prāna. Even if we take another sense of Asura as demon, literally 'non-solar', dark or 'noctural' it does not create any perplexity but rather explains the reason for which Varuṇa in connection with Mitra, the sun and the god of the day, is called the god of night.

There is no doubt that 'all' is reduced to One Unconceivable Finality [272] termed as the Absolute thought or the Absolute Being described as "super lucent, super-splendent, super-essential, super-sublime and super-everything that cannot be named," but at the same time, it is Brahman from whom the universe, the Saṁsāra, Samsṛti or the perpetual flux and motion are derived Form the Supreme Being has come out the Becoming or the Not-Being and in the Becoming the Being and the not-Being are inseparately united as light and its shadow. In Becoming that is Not-Being are present the Being

268. Go. Br. 2.2 9 Virāḍ Varuṇasya patnl
269 RV 3.55. 1-22 'Mahaddevānāmasuratvamekam'.
270. Asūn rāti dadātīti asuraḥ.
271 S B. 6 6,2,6
Āsurī māyā svadhyāya kṛtāsīti prāṇo vā
asustasyaiṣā māyā svadhayā kṛtā
272. Śaṅkarācārya on Vedānta Sūtras II.1.14.

and the Not-Being, the Spirit and the Non-Spirit united together So the 'Āpaḥ' denoting the stage of Becoming, though envelope the Supreme Being still have in them the womb that carries the germ of the universe as well as the Lord thereof. (Kṣetra Kṣetrajña) Since Becoming is Not-Being and is contrary to the essential nature of the Being, it is darkness in as much as it conceals the Reality or the Being According to the Vedantic terminology while Brahman is the Ātman or spirit, the Universe which proceeds from it is the Ānātman, Not-Being or Becoming. The Anātmatattva is Asuratva as well as Tama, the darkness This would be further certified by examining a verse of the Īśopaniṣad where this terminology is used,

> 'Devilish are those worlds called,
> With blind darkness (Tamas) covered O'er
> Unto them' on deceasing, go
> Whatever folk are slayers of the Self (Ātmahan).[273]

Thus Varuṇa, the presiding deity of Āpah, or Becoming, or Non-Being or Māyā or Vālk is called Asura and the regent of night (Rātri) Rta is the cosmic order, the law of becoming Satya stands for the Truth of Being and Ṛta for the Truth of Becoming Varuṇa ordains Rta The cosmic or primeval matter (Āpah), cosmic law (Ṛta) and the quality of enveloping the Reality through the cosmic reality as well as the cosmic sovereignty are all attributed to Varuna Thus there is nothing that is paradoxical in the depictions of Varuṇa in the Ṛgveda It becomes even clearer when we discuss the relation between Mitra and Varuṇa who are conjointly delineated in many hymns They are called the guardians of the world [274] By their ordinance the great sky shines [275] They discharge the rain [276] Their godhead is beyond the ken of the skies, or of rivers [277] They are awful deities, the haters and dispellers of falsehood [278] They are described as righteous and as promoters

273 Īśāvāsyopaniṣad 3
Asuryā nāmā te lokā andhena tamasāvṛtāḥ
Tamste pretyābhigacchanti ye ke cātmahano janāḥ

274 RV 2,27,4
275 Ibid , 10 65 5
276. Ibid , 5 62 3
277. Ibid., 1 151 9
278. Ibid. 1.152,1

of righteous rites[279] and as the lords of truth and light.[280] Mitra and Varuṇa are together called Devāsurā i e., the Deva and the Asura.[281] Though Mitra and Varuna are attributed the same functions and represent a perfect unity in working yet in spite of this impartial description one factor is made clear that there are two entities at work We have suggested it before that the Universe or the Becoming means the unity of the Being and the Non-Being or the Spirit and the Matter or the Purṣua and the Prakṛti which work harmoniously in the cosmos. Still these two factors are contrary to each other as light and shadow. In the Mitrāvaruṇā hymns though both are conjointly addressed and are attributed the same functions, the distinction between the two is brought out by the very significant epithet i e Devāsurā for Mitrāvaruṇā meaning that Mitra and Varuṇa represent the two contraries designated as Deva and Asura in the language of the Saṁhitā, or may be described ar Purusa and Prakṛti or Being and Non-Being in the philosophical terminology i e. the element of consciousness and strength or energy This distinction is more widely brought out in the Brahmanic literature which metaphorically describes Mitra and Varuṇa as the day and the night[282] or as the bright half and the dark of a month[283] This dual invocation of Mitra and Varuṇa is preserved in the Zend Avesta where they are Mitra and Ahura Prof Rōth observes that the essential character of the two gods, as distinguished from one another, is nowhere distinctly expressed in the hymns and was in fact originally one which could not be defined with intellectual precision But the stage of religious culture which lies before us in the Ṛgveda, enables us to distinguish this difference as one already existing, viz , that Mitra is the celestial light in its manifestation by day, while

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279 RV 1 2 8 , 23 5, 136 4, 2 27 4, 5 63 1
Ṛtāvṛdhā, Ṛtāvānā, Ṛtajātā, Ṛtaspṛsā, Ṛtasya Gopau.

280 Ibid , 1 23 5 Ṛtasya jyotiṣaspatī

281. Ibid , 8,25,4 Mahāntā Mitrāvarunā Smrājā devāvasurā.

282 Tān B 25 10 10 Ahorātrī vai Mitrāvaruṇau
Ait Br. 6 10 Aharvai mitro rātrir Varunaḥ,

283 Tān. Br. 25.10 10. Arddḥamāsau (suklakṛṣṇapakṣau) vai Mitra-varuṇau.

Varuṇa, though the Lord of light and of all time, yet rules especially over the nightly heaven.[284]

He says further that the conjoint descriptions of Mitra and Varuṇa are characterised by similarity between the two as the harmonious forces and the contrast between the two as the opposite forces. We have suggested before that Mitra represents the element of Puruṣa in the universe. Purusa as the Absolute is unqualified but as it is united with Prakṛti it takes on him the characteristics of the latter and therefore is attributed the functions as well as the qualifying terms of Prakṛti Mitra and Varuṇa together express the Cijjaḍagranthi, i e. the unity, oneness or conciliation of the two contrary factors, being and not-being or light and darkness or day and night in the cosmic functioning

In the hymns of the Veda, the expression Indrāvaruṇā also denotes the same truth In our discussion on Indra it has been shown that Indra indicates the light, the sun or the spirit as well as the source of the active force with reference to the cosmos Indra is the same as Mitra. For this reason the expression Mitrāvarunā is conveniently substituted by Indrā varuṇā. For instance in RV VII 65 3, Mitra and Varuṇa conjointly are spoken of as barriers against falsehood and furnished with many nooses, which the hostile mortal cannot surmount and in the RV VII 84 2, Indra aud Varuna are described as binding with bonds not formed of rope Indra and Varuṇa are together invoked in many hymns of the Veda The relation of Being and Not-Being or Puruṣa and Prakṛti is beautifully set off in the conjoint delineation of Indra and Varuna where it is stated that the two are held by Āpaḥ or becoming. It is said, that "the goddess of waters held in place Indra and Varuṇa,"[285]

Thus we conclude that Mitrāvaruṇā (Mitra and Varuṇa)

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284 'The highest gods of the Arian races' published in Journal of German Oriental Society, VI p 70f

285. RV 7 85 3 Āpāściddhi svayaśasaḥ sadaḥsu devīrindram varuṇam devatā dhuḥ

or Indrāvaruṇā (Indra and Varṇa) represent the Sat and the Asat or the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti or the spirit and the Matter or the Being and the Non-Being, or metaphorically the day and the night in the universe or cosmos or Becoming, the perpetual flux and motion. At the same time, since, Becoming is only a manifestation of the Supreme Being, the relation between the two is that of identity (Tādātmya Lakṣaṇā Sambandha) and the relation of the two complementary entities, the Being and the Non-Being or Indra and Varuṇa with the Supreme is also that of identity which is realized by the wise.[286] This is the reason that the Being and the Non-Being are taken as manifestations of the Superme Being, the One, who is described by the wise as one with various expressions (Ekam sat viprāḥ bahudhā vadanti)

VARUṆA IN THE YAJURVEDA

The position of Varuna in the Yajurveda as well is very much exalted. He is the governor of the moral world and waters, made a path for the sun and holds his noose for the sinners. In the Ṛgveda Varuṇa is associated with herbs but in the Yajurveda he appears as a physician and the lord of physicians. This aspect of his personality is found further developed in the Purāṇas and the Puranic texts on the Dharmatattvas (Institutes of Hindu religion).

In the Yajurveda it is clearly mentioned that the waters where Varuṇa dwells are the waters of the air and are described in an eulogical style It is said, 'Sharers in joy are these majestic waters, inviolable, industrious and investing. In these as homes Varuṇa made his dwelling, he, child of waters, in the best of mothers.[287] The epithet 'best of mothers' used for waters, indicates that these waters are protective and nourishing. Moreover 'Āpaḥ' denotes not only simple waters but the primeval matter called *Mahatsalilam*[288] with which, Brahman

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286. RV., 10.129.4 Sato bandhumasati niravindan hṛdi pratiṣya kavayo manīṣā.
287. YV. 10.7
288. Tai. B. 1.1.3.5 Āpo va idamagre mahatsalilamāsit.

creates everything and which are identical to Aditi, the Śakti of the supreme, who has created all the Ādityas and the world. So these waters are called the best of mothers and Varuṇa is described as their son.

Varuṇa is the lord of Ṛta, the universal order or law. These primeval waters or the cosmic energy or the creative power or Aditi representing philosophically the desire of the Supreme to create are the many names of one phenomenon and Varuṇa is the 'archetypal symbol' of this region of activity as explained before.[289] Aditi, is therefore, also called the queen of order, 'We call to succour us the mighty Mother of those whose sway is just, queen of Ṛta, strong ruler, far-expanding, never decaying, Aditi the gracious guide and good protectress'.[290] Aditi, the queen of Ṛta is identical to Virāt who is called the wife of Varuṇa in the Brāhmaṇa texts.[291]

Thus Varuna is related with the cosmic waters, the cosmic law, Aditi, Virāt etc. and these characteristics of Varuṇa are sketched with a variety of diction befitting various sacrificial rites delineated in the Veda of Yajus. Many verses are taken from the Ṛgveda to be employed in the sacrificial worship. Ṛta may mean the cosmic order but the devotee looks at it as meets his eye and to him Ṛta means the social, ethical, religious and such other laws which concern him The violation of these laws would bring punishment and then noose of Varuṇa takes a very practical shape, specially when misery befalls unseen. So he is invoked constantly by the devotees to get rid of his noose. The fear of Varuṇa's noose is eternal as there is perpetual feeling of guilt in human mind on account of an awareness of constantly violating some law or the other in action, speech or thought. After singing Varuṇa's praise through a verse from the Ṛgveda and offering an oblation and homage to Varuṇa the maker of the law and the pathways, says the devotee, 'To Varuṇa be reverential homage. Varuṇa's noose beneath our feet is trampled.[292] From Varuṇa's noose am I delivered.'[293] Varuṇa is thus addressed, 'Varuṇa' from the upmost bend release us, let down the lowest and remove the

289. Cf. Varuṇa in the Ṛgveda 290. YV. 21.5
291. Go Up Br. 2 9 Virāḍ varuṇasya patnī.
292. YV. 8.23 293. Ibid., 5.39

midmost. So in thy holy law may we made sinless belong to Aditi, O thou Āditya.[294] Truly all these are Varuṇa's ordinances.[295] I ask this of thee with my prayer adoring; thy worshipper asks this with his oblations. Varuṇa, stay thou here and be not angry: steal not our life from us, O thou wide ruler.'[296]

The law of Varuṇa is extended in the heaven and the earth. 'The encompassing heaven and the earth by Varuṇa's decree, undecaying and potent stand parted each from each.'[297]

The Yajurveda speaks of three bonds of Varuṇa. 'Three bonds they say thou have in heaven to bind, three in the waters, three within the ocean. To me thou appear Varuṇa, O courser, there where they say is the sublimest birth place'.[298] According to Sāyanācārya the waters mean the habitable world, the bonds being seed, rain and tillage, the ocean means region of air, in which the bonds are cloud, lightning and thunder and with these three bonds Varuṇa binds the sinner.[299] The three bonds of Varuṇa correspond to the concept of threefold misery that is a characteristic of the evolution (*Saṁsṛṣṭi*).

'Varuṇa and Mitra', this eternal compound occurs repeatedly and both of them are invoked together to come and take their seat in the northern direction of the sacrifice and maintain law.[300] It is stated that Mitra and Varuṇa bring rain [301]

In the sacrificial rites Varuṇa is associated with the western direction[302] and a black ram with one white foot is to be sacrificed for him.[303]

Finally the ordainer of the law and the waters appears doctoring lungs and liver.[304] He is the physician[305] and the lord of physicians.[306] The herbs or the *oṣadhayaḥ* are sup-

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294. YV. 12.12
295. Ibid., 4.30
296. YV. 18.49
297 Ibid., 34.45
298. Ibid., 29.15
Triṇi ta āhurdivi bandhanāni triṇyapsu triṇyantaḥ samudre.
Uteva me Varuṇaśacbantsyarvanyatrā ta āhuḥ parama janitram.
299. Sāyaṇa on RV. 1.24.15
300. YV. 2.3.
301. Ibid., 2.16
302. Ibid., 15.12
303. Ibid., 29.58 Vāruṇaḥ kṛṣṇa ekaśitipātpetvaḥ
304. YV. 19.85
305. Ibid., 28.34
306. Ibid., 21.40 Vāruṇam bhiṣajām patim svāhā

posed to come out from waters.[307] Moreover Varuṇa is requested to save the water and plants.[308] The relation of water and herbs is very important in Āyurveda as most of the Ayurvedic medicines are prepared by processing the herbs with water. So the lord of Āpaḥ became the lord of herbs (Varuṇa is identified with moon sometimes) and finally stepped into the field of medicine

VARUṆA IN THE SĀMAVEDA

Out of the seventy-five original verses of the Sāmaveda, not a single is addressed to Varuṇa but it should not be assumed that Varuṇa is not a celebrated god of the Sāmaveda. Many Ṛks addressed to Varuṇa and Mitrāvaruṇā have been turned to the Sāman melody and Varuṇa is sung in the most devout fashion Holder of eternal law and a noose, the wise Varuṇa is a god of the cult of worship in the Sāmaveda.

VARUNA IN THE ATHARVAVEDA

While discussing the position of Varuṇa in the Atharvaveda, Macdonell remarks, "In the Atharvaveda Varuṇa appears divested of his powers as a universal ruler retaining only the control of the department of waters "[309] First, this statement does not show that the position of Varuṇa has become inferior in the Atharvaveda because the Āpaḥ, in the midst of which the king Varuṇa moves looking at the true and the false deeds of men, signify in the Atharvaveda also, the primeval waters or the Becoming or the cosmos and are described as of golden hue, pure and purifying, in which is born Savitā and Agni and which serve as the material cause for the agents of creation (the gods) high in the heaven and become manifold.[310]

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307 S B 14.9.4 1 308. YV. 6 22
Ibid , 3 6 1,7

309 Vedic Mythology, S 12. Varuṇa

310. AV 1 33, 1-3

Hiraṇyavarṇāḥ śucayaḥ pāvakā yāsu jātaḥ savitā yāsvagniḥ,
Yā agnim garbham dadhire suvarṇāstā na āpaḥ śam syonā bhavantu
Yāsām rājā varuṇo yāti madhye satyānṛte avapaśyañjanānam, yā agni ..
Yāsām devā divi kṛṇvanti bhakṣam yā antarikṣe bahudhā bhavanti, yā agni...

Secondly, this statement is not absolutely correct as we do come across most magnificient hymns addressed to Varuṇa in the Atharvaveda where Varuṇa is highly celebrated. We give below the 16th hymn from book IV of the Atharvaveda.

"The mighty lord on high our deeds, as if at hand, espies; The gods know all men do, though men would fair their acts disguise.
Whoever stands, whoever moves or steals from place to place; or hides him in his secret cell,—the gods his movement trace.
Whenever two together plot, and deem they are alone, king Varuṇa is there, a third and all their schemes are known.
This earth is his, to him belong those vast and boundless skies.
Both seas within him rest, and yet in that small pool he lies. Whoever far beyond the sky should think his way to wing. He could not there elude the grasp of Varuṇa the king.
His spies, descending from the skies, glide all this world around;
Their thousand eyes all-scanning sweep to earth's remotest bound.
Whatever exists in heaven and earth, whatever beyond the skies,
Before the eyes of Varuṇa, the king, unfolded lies.[311]
The ceaseless winkings all he counts of every mortal's eyes;
He wields this universal frame as gamester throws his dice.
Those knotted nooses which though flingest, O god, the bad to snare—
All liars let them overtake, but all the truthful spare."

Professor Roth[312] remarks with regard to this hymn, "There

311. Translated by Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts. Vol V. p. 64.
312. Abhandlung uver den Atharvaveda, Tubingen 1856. pp. 29f. where the hymn is translated into German.

is no hymn in the whole Vedic literature which expresses the divine omniscience in such forcible terms as this." The last few lines of hymn are considered to be the magical formula by Röth, Winternitz and others. Prof. Muir remarks "The hymn is concluded by two verses, containing imprecation". This impression is created also due to the particular tone of this Veda.

In the concluding verses (AV. IV. 16.7-8) Varuṇa is visualized as ever watchful and ready to punish the guilty with his nooses.

> Varuṇa, snare him with a hundred nooses,
> Man's watcher ! Let not him who lies escape thee
> There let the villain sit with hanging belly and
> bandaged like a cask whose hoops are broken
> Varuṇa sends, and drives away diseases: Varnṇa
> is both native and a stranger,
> Varuṇa is celestial and is human.

Thus we find that in the Atharvaveda also the spies of Varuṇa are mentioned. Varuṇa is spoken of as a king (Varunasya Rājñaḥ;[313] Namaste Rājan;)[314] and this explains the notion of spies. Says Macdonell, "The conception may very well have been suggested by the spies with whom a strict ruler on earth is surrounded "[315] Varuna is addressed as Māyī, the possessor of the mystic power in the Atharvaveda as well. Varuna appears as Asura, Divine Being or Lord par excellence

In the Atharvaveda Varuṇa is conceived of as a God who chastises the sinners as well as pardons those who ask for forgiveness. In the Atharvaveda I. 10, 1-3, a priest after an intercession with Varuna, exculpates a sinner who has offended the Divine Lord Varuṇa.

"This Lord is the God's ruler, for the wishes of Varuṇa, the king, must be accomplished.

Therefore; triumphant with the prayer, I utter, I rescue this man from the fierce one's anger.

Homage be paid, King Varuṇa, to your anger : for you O terrible God, detect every falsehood.

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313. AV. 1.10.1 314. Ibid., 1.10.2
315. Macdonell, Vedic Mythology, 12, Varuṇa.

I send a thousand others forth together: let this your servant live a hundred autumns.

Whatever falsehood you have told, much evil spoken with the tongue.

I liberate you from the noose of Varuṇa the righteous king.

I free you from Vaiśvānara, from the great surging flood of sin.

Call us your brothers, Awful One, and pay attention to our prayer."

We find the same element in the following verse :

"Ward off from this side and from that, O Varuṇa, the deadly dart :

Give us your great protection, turn the lethal weapon far away."[316]

Regarding this aspect of Varuṇa's personality Prof. Max *Muller* remarked, "This god is one of the most interesting creations of the Hindu mind, because though we can still perceive the physical background from which he rises, the vast starry, brilliant expanse above, his features, more than those of any of the Vedic gods, have become completely, transfigured, and he stands before us a god who watches over the world, punishes the evil doer, and even forgives the sins of those who implore his pardon."[317]

While dealing with Varuṇa in the Ṛgveda, we have discussed Varuṇa's connection with the waters. In the Atharvaveda Varuṇa is called the Lord of the Waters—(Apāmadhipati).

But in the hymns of Atharvaveda, which are devoted to philosophical discussion with regard to the highest deity, Varuṇa is conceived as identical to the Supreme Soul. It is said that He is Varuna, He is Agni, He is Mitra.[318] All his activities are supported by Brahman.[319] This principle of the identity of different gods is found fully developed in the Upaniṣads.

316. AV. 1.20.3

317. India, What can it teach us ? p. 195

318. AV. 13.3.13 319. Ibid., 5.25.4,17

THE MUTUAL RELATIONSHIP OF INDRA WITH VARUṆA

The relationship between Indra and Varuṇa has been discussed before in our delineation of Varuṇa as a deity of the Ṛgveda. In many hymns of the Veda Indra and Varuṇa are conjointly addressed as Indrāvaruṇā who are called the two monarchs of the universe,[320] who hollowed out the channels of tha water and set the sun in motion in the sky.[321] They are known as the vanquishers of Vṛtra.[322] Indrāvaruṇā are called upon to render assistance in battle[323] and grant victory [324] They cast their mighty bolt against the wicked[325] and bestow protection, prosperity,[326] fame, wealth and abundance of steeds [327] They are called the drinkers of the pressed Soma; their car comes to the sacrificial place and they are addressed to rejoice in the sacrifice.[328] In some passages, however, the conflicting and contrasting characteristics of their personalities are set forth. It is said that the one overcomes the destructive enemy and the other with few repels many.[329] The one loves to slay enemies in battle; the other always maintains his ordinannces.[330] Another verse is a prayer for removal of Varuṇa's wrath and attaining of ample space from Indra.[331] The one discriminates between the good and the bad of people, the other slays the Vṛtras. Nine hymns and parts of several from the Ṛgveda alone are addressed to Indrāvaruṇā. It is clear from the references quoted above that Indra and Varuna are described as engaged in joint actions as well as different actions are attributed to them Apart from these two factors a third element is also noticeable in these hymns regarding the relationship of Indra and Varuna. Indra and Varuna are shown as identical as for example, Indra declares in the following verse, 'I am Indra, I am Varuṇa, I am those two in greatness '[332]

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320. RV 1,17,1
321. Ibid., 7.82,3
322. Ibid., 6 82,2
323 Ibid., 4.41,11
324. Ibid., 1 17,7
325. Ibid , 4.41,4
326. Ibid., 1.17, 7-8
327. RV. 4.41,2,10, 6 68,8
328. Ibid , 6.61,10,11
329. Ibid , 7.82,5
330 Ibid., 7.83,9
331. Ibid., 7.84,2
332. Ibid , 6.4,42, 2-3

From these descriptions of Indra and Varuṇa some scholars have concluded that Indra replaced Varuṇa. This opinion was voiced first of all by Röth. Professor Röth observes that the worship of Indra has superceded that of Varuṇa, who is related to an older dynasty of gods than Indra. The substance of his observation is given below.

The supersession of the one god by the other, Röth considers to be a result, or feature, of the gradual modification which the old Arian religion soon began to undergo after it had been transplanted into India. The more supersensuous or spiritual elements of this religion he thinks were preserved, though in a peculiar and somewhat altered form, in the Persian creed, which, at the same time, rejected almost entirely the gods representing the powers of nature, whom it had also inherited from an earlier age. The Indian faith, as found in the Ṛgveda had on the contrary, according to Roth, begun already to give the preference to these latter deities, to transfer to them an even increasing dignity and honour, to draw down the divine life into nature and to bring it even closer to man. Proof of this is specially to be found in the development of the myth regarding Indra, a god who, in the earlier period of Arian religious history, either had no existence, or was confined to an obscure province The Zend legend assigns to another god the function which forms the essence of the later myth concerning Indra. This God Trita, however disappears in the Indian mythology of the Vedic age, and is succeeded by Indra. And not only so, but towards the end of this period Indra begins to dislodge even Varuṇa himself the highest god of the ancient creed from the position which is shown, partly by historical testimonies, and partly by the very conception of his character, to belong to him, and becomes, if not the supreme god, at least the national god, whom his encomiasts strive to elevate above the ancient Varuṇa. This process was completed in the post Vedic period, as is shown already in the Brāhmaṇas and other works of the same era. Indra becomes the chief of the Indian heaven, and maintains this place even in the composite system which adopted into itself the three great gods, common to the Arians (i.e. the Persians and Indians), and perhaps also to the entire Indo-

Germanic race, Varuna-Ormuzd-Uranos, is thrown back into the darkness, and in his own room Indra, a peculiarly Indian and a national god, is intruded. With Varuṇa disappears at the same time the ancient character of the people, while with Indra there was introduced in the same degree a new character, foreign to the primitive Indo-Germanic nature. Viewed in its internal aspect this modification of the religious conceptions of the Aryas consists in an ever increasing tendency to attenuate the supersensuous, mysterious side of the creed, until the gods, who were originally the highest and most spiritual, have become unmeaning representative of nature, Varuṇa being nothing more than the ruler of the sea, and Ādityas merely regents of sun's course. This process of degradation naturally led to a reaction.[333] This view of Prof. Róth has been accepted by many scholars. Zenaide A. Ragozin says in his book 'Vedic India', 'When scholars tell us that Indra is a creation of a later and different epoch from that of the old sky gods Dyous and Varuṇa, a growth moreover, of India's own soil (it were perhaps more correct to say Punjab's) they by no means rest assertion on mere circumstantial evidence. There is in the Ṛgveda itself, ample evidence of this impetuous storm and war-god having supplanted the ten great Asuras, and that by no means peaceably, without strife and bitterness dividing the followers of the new worship and the old until the latter were carried away by the tide of the time and public feeling'.[334] Prof Whitney holds the same opinion.[335] Dr. Windischman also opines that Varuṇa belongs to an older group of gods than Indra, who became the highest God at a later stage when the high position of Varuṇa was given to Indra.

Prof. Róth's theory of Varuṇa's supersession by Indra is based on his firm belief that there is a definite historical relation between the Ādityas and the Amashaspands of the Zend

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333. J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts Vol. V. p. 117.

334. Vedic India by Zenaide A. Ragozin pp. 202 3.

335. Journal American Oriental Society iii. 327.

Avesta and Varuṇa, who is one of the Ādityas and must have been worshipped by the Aryans before the separation of the Indian from the Persian branch of that race. This view is further supported by Professor Whitney, who regards Ahur Mezda, as a development of Varuṇa. Says he, "Ahur Mezda, Ormuzd, himself is as hardly to be doubted, a development of Varuṇa, the Ādityas are correlatives of the Amshaspands, there even exists in the Persian religion the same close connection between Ahur Mezda and Mithra as in the Indian between Mitra and Varuṇa."[336]

But the arguments given in support of the above mentioned theory have been questioned. Prof. Muir refers[337] to Prof. Spiegel, a very prominent Zend scholar who had collected all the positive information he could obtain in the Avesta and came to the conclusion that any connection of the Amshaspands with the Ādityas is enshrouded with doubt. Prof. Muir says further, "Beyond the fact noticed by Roth, that Varuna is much less frequently mentioned in the last than in the earlier books of the Ṛgveda, I have not observed in the hymns themselves anything that can be constructed as a decisive proof that the worship of Indra was superseding that of Varuna during the period of their composition. It is true that even in the earlier parts of the Veda the number of hymns addressed to the former god is much greater than that in which latter is celebrated. But I have not discovered any expressions which would distinctly indicate that the popularity of the one was waning, and that of the other increasing." Indra and Varuṇa are called the two monarchs, samrājā and the supporters of all creatures, dharttāra carṣāṇinām. The epithet dhṛtavartā (RV. VI, 68 10) applies to both, Indra and Varuṇa.

It would be wrong to assume from the laudatory hymns of Indra, that these hymns were composed by the worshippers of Indra to gain for him the supremacy over Varuṇa because the other gods are also magnified in the same pane-

336. J.A.O.S. iii. 327.
337. Oriental Sanskrit texts, Volume V. p. 129.

lyrical style; there is no question of contention or antagonism between the two deities with reference to such expressions. Says Prof. Max Müller,[338] "While Agni is invoked, Indra is forgotten; there is no competition between the two nor any rivalry between them or other gods." Prof. Muir's[339] concluding remark is, "If, therefore, we were to infer from passages like I.103,3 (which declare Varuṇa and Sūrya to be subject to Indra),[340] that the worship of Indra was beginning to gain ground on that of Varuṇa we should have, in like manner, to conclude from the other texts just cited, that the worship of Sāvitri, or Viṣṇu, or Agni, was beginning to supersede that of all the other deities who are subordinated to them, not excepting Indra himself."

The same view is expressed even by Macdonell He says,[341] "The argument from the number of hymns is not very cogent, as in all the earlier books of the Rgveda far more hymns are addressed to Indra than to Varuṇa. In book III, no hymn is devoted to Varuṇa but 22 to Indra, and in book II, there is only one to Varuna and 23 to Indra. Moreover, these two books added together are considerably shorter than the tenth alone. It is however true that Varuṇa is much less frequently mentioned in the last book than in the earlier books of the Ṛgveda. Beyond this fact there seems to be no direct and decisive proof of the supersession of Varuṇa by Indra during the composition of the Ṛgveda."

We should like to take up hymn 12th of the second Maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda, that has been referred to as an evidence in support of the view of Indra's supersession over Varuṇa. G K. Bhatt[342] makes the following remarks, "There are however, a few references here which indicate an achievement of a different kind.

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338. A History of Ancient Sanskrit Literature, p. 289.
339 Original Sanskrit texts Vol. V, p. 126
340. Yasya dyāvāpṛthivī paumsyam mahad yasya vrate varuṇo yasya Sūr yaḥ
341. Vedic Mythology, SS. 22 p. 65
342. The genesis of Rgveda II 12. pp 25-34. J.U.B. 26. 1957-58.

(a) Indra is described as having measured out the expanse of the wide mid-region and as having supported the heaven.[343]

(b) The epithet 'Ghora' is applied to him.[344]

(c) He is said to smite the inconsiderate sinners with his thunderbolt, and not tolerate the one who provokes.[345]

The attribution of the cosmic function of supporting the heaven, if not the creation of the sun and dawn,[346] and the connection of the idea of sin and punishment are no doubt understandable on the assumption of the supreme position of Indra. But when we remember that these notions are peculiarly associated with Varuna, their attribution to Indra appears to be deliberate And if it is so, here probably is some little evidence of Varuṇa's supersession by Indra. Be it as it may, the above theory furnishes a proper psychological background for the origin of a hymn of the type that we have before us. It is possible to imagine that while a big section of the Vedic Aryans allied round their national hero, now raised to the status of a national god, there could have been some people who still clung to their old god Varuṇa, and doubted the supremacy of the newly risen Indra Such a state of affairs would normally divide the Aryans into two camps, namely of those who still followed Varuṇa and those who chose to follow Indra. The present hymn therefore looks like an eloquent attempt on the part of Indra followers to convince the followers of Varuṇa of the greatness of Indra and win them over to their own side. The Janāsas in the refrain refers to the followers of Varuṇa who were little hesitant still to accept the new god, and the poet who undoubtedly is an Indra follower recounts the cosmic and physical prowess of Indra and confidently appeals to these people to have faith in him."

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343 Yo antarikṣaṁ vimame variyo, yo dyāmastabhnātsa janāsa Indraḥ.

344. Yam smā pṛcchanti kuh seti ghoram.

345. Ya śaśvato mahyeno dadhā......

346. Ya sūryaṁ ya uṣasaṁ jajāna......

It has been shown above that this theory has been refuted by scholars and has not many supporters today.

Moreover a dispassionate psychological analysis of the above mentioned hymn offers an evidence supporting the presence of philosophical mysticism in the Ṛgveda rather than an effort to show the supremacy of Indra over Varuṇa through an eulogical delineation of the former. Repeated occurrence of doubt in the mind of a human being in quest of the Highest Truth is the most natural phenomenon. "All philosophy starts with doubts and questions. A certain uneasiness, intellectual dissatisfaction is felt with the state of the things, beliefs held and questions start, an indication of the disturbed mind. The Rgveda clearly shows us these very early beginnings of the philosophical thought as for instance in IV. 12, the famous 'sa janāsa Indraḥ' Sūkta, all the great deeds of Indra are extolled and his greatness is urged upon the minds of others but the Sūkta bears an appearance of a spirited effort to stabilise a shaken faith."[347] This is what is depicted in the following verse.

'Of whom, the terrible, they ask, where is he ? Or verily they say of him, He is not '

He sweeps away, like birds, the foe's possessions; have faith in him, for He, O men, is Indra,'[348]

The path that leads to the attainment of the highest spiritual truth is compared to the edge of a blade and a hymn like this inspires faith in a spiritual aspirant when shattered with incertitude. In the Ṛgveda, we come across verses which depict eagerness for knowledge as

'Unripe in mind, in spirit undiscerning, I ask of these gods established places.

And again

'I ask, unknowing, those who know, the sages, as on all ignorant for sake of knowledge.

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347. T G. Mainkar, Mysticism in the Ṛgveda.

348. RV. 2 12.5 Yam smā pṛcchanti kuha seti ghoramutemāhurnaiṣo astītyenam."

What was that One who in the Unborn's image has established and fixed firm these world's six regions.

Let him who knows presently declare it, this lovely Bird's securely founded station.

Who, that the father of this Calf discerneth beneath the Upper realm above the lower.

Showing himself a sage, may here declare it where hath the Godlike spirit had its rising ?

I ask thee of the earth's extremest limit, where is the centre of the world, I ask thee.

I ask thee of the Stallion's seed prolofic, I ask of highest heaven where Speech abidth.

or again :

'Who hath beheld him as he sprang to being, see how the boneless One supports the bony ?

Where is the blood of earth, the life, the spirit ? Who may approach the man who knows, to ask it ?'[349]

RV II.12 is an answer to such a quest and many hymns of this nature are found in the Veda. So it is wrong to conclude that this hymn is composed to show the supremacy of Indra over Varuṇa and that it declares rivalry between Indra and Varuṇa 'All these texts, however, which are so laudatory of Indra, may be paralleled in the Ṛgveda, not only by similar ones referring to Mitra and Varuṇa, but also by a further set of texts, in which other gods are magnified in the same style of a panegyric.'[350]

Before concluding this subject we want to take up RV. IV 42 and X 129. These hymns have been put forward by the French Vedic scholar, Louis Renon who opines, "There is in fact evidence that sovereignty of Varuṇa preceded that of Indra and hymns 4, 42 and 10, 129 show a rivalry between the two Divinities."[351] RV. IV. 42 is given below for examination.

349. RV. I.164.

350. J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts. Volume V. p. 125.

351. Louis Renon. Vedic India, Translated from French by Philip Spratt, p. 59

"Two-fold is my empire, that of the whole Kṣatriya race and all the immortals are ours; the gods associate me with the acts of Varuṇa; I rule over (those) of the proximate form of man.

I am the king Varuṇa; on me (the gods) bestow those principal energies (that are) destructive of the Asuras; they associate me with the worship of Varuṇa. I rule over (the acts) of the proximate form of man.

I am Indra, I am Varuṇa, I am those two in greatness; I am the vast, profound, beautiful, heaven and earth; intelligent, I give like Tvaṣṭṛ animation to all beings; I uphold earth and heaven.

I have distributed the moisture-shedding waters; I have upheld the sky as the abode of the water. by the water I have become the preserver of the water, the son of Aditi illustrating the three-fold elementary space.

Warriors, well mounted, ardent for contest, invoke me; selected (combatants invoke) me in battle; I, the affluent Indra, instigate the conflict, and endowed with victorious prowess, I raise up the dust (in the battle).

I have done all these deeds; no one resist my divine, unsurpassed vigour; and when the Soma juices, when sacred songs exhilarate me, then the unbounded heaven and earth are both alarmed.

All beings recognize thee (Varuṇa), and thou worshipper, addressest these (encomiums) to Varuṇa, thou, Indra art, reknowned as slaying Vṛtra; thou hast set the obstructed rivers free to flow

The Seven Ṛṣis were the protectors of this our (kingdom) when the son of Durgaha was in bonds; performing worship they obtained for (his queen) from the favours of Indra and Varuṇa, Trasdasyu, like Indra the slayer of foes, dwelling near the gods

The wife of Purukuts propitiated you two, Indra and Varuṇa, with oblations and prostrations and therefore you gave her the king Trasdasyu, the slayer of foes, dwelling near the gods.

May we glorifying you both, be delighted by riches; may

the gods be pleased by oblations, the cow by pasture : and do you, Indra and Varuṇa, daily grant us that same milch cow, (riches), free from any imperfection."

The first six verses of this hymn are Ādhyātmikya, and we find many hymns of this nature in the Ṛgveda.

This hymn depicts a stage at which the two deities are spoken of as one. Here, in this hymn, the identifications of the two deities is proclaimed. The Devatā of the first six verses is Ātman, which is identified with Varuṇa in the first two verses, with Indra, Varuṇa and Tvaṣṭṛ in the third verse and with the sun in the fourh verse. Thus this hymn strikes a beautiful note proclaiming the unity behind the diversity of god-heads in the mystic fashion of the Veda. There is indeed no historical proof for any attempted display of the supremacy of Indra over Varuna Philosophically, of course, the supremacy of Indra representing the Puruṣa may be spoken of as established over Varuṇa denoting the Prakṛti or the Āpaḥ because the latter is enforced by the former and is only a manifestation of Him.

The hymn 129 of the tenth Maṇḍala of the Ṛgveda is the famous Nāsadīya Sūkta. Prof. Louis Renou has not explained what in this hymn presents an evidence in favour of an attempted show of Indra's supremacy over Varuṇa.

In the Veda a particular deity is conceived as the highest when it is celebrated on account of the fundamental concept of the unity among the diversity of gods who represent the different manifestations of the One. So we cannot conclude from the hymns referred to above that the worship of Indra superseded that of Varuṇa.

We propose to say, that in the cosmos Indra and Varuṇa represent the entities which are complementary to each other. In our discussion on Indra and Varuṇa in relation to Āpaḥ an attempt has been made to clarify this point. Indra and Varuṇa representing Puruṣa and Prakṛti or Sat and Asat are as much complementary to each other as they are contrary in nature, but the two together make the universe to go on. The concept of the indispensable existence of the two entities for all creation is found in all the cosmic hymns of the Veda. In the RV. 10.190, these two entities occur as Satya and Ṛta,

the Truth of Being and the Truth of Becoming;[352] in the Puruṣa Sūkta they appear as the Adhipuruṣa and the Virāj, the Spirit and the matter,[353] in the Nāsadīya Sūkta they are presented as the Ābhu and the Tucchya, the Vast Creative Principle and the Enveloping Formless Void.[354] The same concept is represented in the compound expressions of the Divinities as Dyāvāpṛthvī, Mitrāvaruṇā, Indrāviṣṇū, Indrāgnī and Uṣasānktā as well as Indrāvaruṇā. One represents the truth of Being, the other the truth of Becoming; one represents the spirit, the other the matter; one symbolises the Vast Creative Principle and the other the enveloping formless void, one denotes metaphorically the Day, the other the Night; one represents the Light and other the Shadow; one is the Being and the other is the Non-being. These two do not represent discord but harmony. Even if an impression of the supremacy of Indra over Varuṇa is made in the Vedas, it is due to the fact that in the Vedic vision as well as in the entire subsequent thought the bright aspect (Sāttvika) of the Reality is considered to be the Supreme. This is what is also indicated by the Gāyatrī Mantra, the essence of all the Vedas and in which the supreme god is looked at as the Divine Light Indra representing this bright aspect the Puruṣa in comparison to Prakṛti, represented by Varuṇa, the Lord of cosmic waters, gained ground in the Veda. But it must be remembered that the other aspect of the Reality is not forgotten; both the aspects are delineated as correlated to each other as is seen in the hymns which are conjointly addressed to Indra and Varuṇa. The Vedic seer visualised the creation as the emanation from the One of two poles, whose interaction produces the active flame which itself was latent in One as desire and which in turn becomes the propelling force of nature. Indra and Varuṇa together symbolise the complementary dualism that causes the creative tension which is immanent in all stages and spheres of evolution, growth, erection or establishment and are considered at the same time as the manifestations of the One.

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352. RV. 10 190,1 Ṛtam ca satyam cābhiddhāt.
353. Ibid., 10.90,5 Tasmādvirālajāyata virājo adhi puruṣa.
354. Ibid., 10.129 3

2

INDRA AND VARUNA IN THE BRĀHMANAS

The archetypal pattern presented in the mythopoeic mode of expression of the Veda is dramatized in the act of ritual in the Brāhmanas The myth and the ritual are both symbolic; both allude to a total vision. A mythical image as well as a ritual is to be seen as a part of a total pattern of significance or meaning. Just as a myth 'is not merely a story told but a reality lived,[1] so the ritual also symbolizes the lived human experience as it symbolizes the 'Creative Synchronization' between an organism and the rhythms of its environment Myth and ritual both embody the cosmic rhythm.

Vedic mythology is very closely related to the ritual i.e. the Yajña. All the saṁhitās have ritualistic texts (the Brāhmanas) attatched to them. It is proclaimed that the Brāhmaṇas desire to 'know through Yajña (ritual) and dāna (liberality) The Brāhmanic texts say that the Yajña is symbolic (Prokṣo vai Yajñaḥ). Yajña is a mythical or spiritual motif of Vedic poetry on which the whole edifice of the ritual of that period is based

Yajña symbolizes that eternal creative act which encompasses all; it represents the glorification of the illumined and the illuminating eternal principle (Devapūja), the co-ordinated participation of all (Saṅgatīkaraṇa) and the fusion of the individual in the collective (dāna; every oblation is offered with the chanting of 'Idanna mama'). This is the divine pattern that was visualised by the Vedic poet in the cosmos where all the 'forces' of nature are working in a co-ordinated way, giving away all that they have as if in reverence for a transcendental eternal principle for the good of all individual

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1. B. Malinowski, *Myth in Primitive Psychology*, P. 21 (London, 1926).

elements with the whole which is presented in the mythical poetry (Devasyakāvyam) of the Veda.

It is very significant that a Brāhmanic rite is accompanied by the chanting of the Vedic Mantras because they lend the fundamental meaning to it 'Myth is the central informing power that gives archetypal significance to the ritual.'[2] Etymologically also mantra ($\surd$Mantr+al) means the statement of the secret or the mystic meaning i e. the 'archetype' that refers to a basic, general and universal pattern in po try and is based upon the parallels which exist between the microcosmic and the macrocosmic world

The Vedic ritual has been preserved in literary texts called the Brāhmanas The main division of the contents of these extensive texts is twofold—the ritualistic injunction and discussions on the meaning of Vedic ritual and all that is related with it.

Thus though the Brāhmanas propose to teach the performance of the sacrifice, they contain also dogmatical, mystical exegetical and philosophical speculations 'Side by side with its insistance on the outer,' says S Radhakrishnan, 'there was also the emphasis on inner purity Truth, godliness, honour to parents, kindness to animals, love of man, abstinence from theft, murder and adultery were inculcated as the essentials of a good life.'

Sāyaṇācārya, in his introduction to the Rgveda as well as in his introduction to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa has given such extracts from the Pūrva Mimāmsā philosophy as may furnish a pretty correct idea of the Brāhmanas He says that a Brāhmaṇa is twofold, containing either commandments (vidhi) or additional explanations (arthavāda) This is confirmed by Āpastamba who states that the Brāhmaṇas are commandments for the sacrifice, all the rest consists of additional explanations. The commandments are of two kinds, either causing something to be done which was not done before, or making something known which was not known before The commandments or Vidhi are such as 'at the Dikṣāniya ceremony he presents a Purodāśa oblation to Agni and Viṣnu', and the additio-

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2. Northrope Fry, 'The Archetypes of literature'

nal explanations or arthavāda are all philosophical passages, such as, 'Self was all this alone in the beginning'. Not going into the controversial details of discussion about defining the Brāhmana, we give the concluding words of Sāyaṇa'[3] that the only division therefore of the Veda that holds good consists in comprehending one part under the old traditional appelation of Mantra and considering all the rest as Brāhmaṇas According to Madhusūdana the Brāhmanas consist of three parts, i e the commandments, the additional explanations and the Vedānta doctrines, the latter being more particularly represented by the Upaniṣads

It is in these occasional free discussions of the Brāhmaṇas that the mystic veil from Indra and Varuna of the Saṁhitās is removed to a great extent The Brāhmanas infact provide the most intimate link to the understanding of the Vedic mantra, the Vedic devatā and the Vedic devatākhyāna A devatā, the mythical symbol was conceived as having for its referent some principle which was significant at various levels of experience The Brāhmanas unfolding the meaning of these mythical symbols have moved at various levels Thus we find in the Brāhmaṇic literature the natural (Ādhidaivika), social (Ādhibhautika), microcosmic (Ādhyātmika) and many other meanings of a devatā along with its ritualistic (Adhiyājñika) interpretation It is due to the archetypal element in the myth that it can thus be interpreted at various levels of meaning and this principle has been very well recognised in these texts. 'What is not mantra is Brāhmana' signifies that the Brāhmaṇas represent paramyth in relation to the Vedic myth. They have recreated the Vedic mythology in various ways Man is always creating a paramyth in his attempt at understanding a myth. So the Brāhmaṇas are highly significant and interesting for our study of Indra and Varuṇa.

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3 Tasmāt nāsti Brāhmanasya lakṣaṇamiti prāpte brūmaḥ. 'Mantrabrāhmanarūpo dvāveva Vede bhāgāvityaṅgikārānamantralakṣaṇasya pūrvamabhihitatvād avaśiṣṭo vedabhāgo Brāhmaṇamityetallakṣanam bhaviṣyati . lakṣaṇadvayam Jaiminiḥ sūtrayamāsa taccodakeṣu matrākhyā, (Jai , 3.1 32) śeṣe brāhmaṇaśabdaḥ (Jai 2 1.32) Tasmin vede keṣucidabhidhāyeṣu vākyeṣū mantra iti Samākhyā sampradāya vidbhirvyavahriyate mantrānadhimaha iti. Mantravyatiriktābhāgeṣu tu brāhmaṇaśabdastair vyavahṛta ityarthaḥ.

INDRA IN THE BRĀHMAṆAS

In the Brāhmanas, Indra is conceived as the foremost among all other gods. He is also identified with all other gods and objects. Indra is called the soul of the sacrifice and the god of the sacrifice[4] The idea contained in the RV. 6.47 18 that Indra assumes multifarious forms through his Māyā, finds more explicit expression in the Brāhmaṇas All forces originate from Indra. Whatever is found manifest in the world is Indra. The Brāhmaṇas say that Indra is 'Sarvadevatā'[5] He is the symbol of the eternal concept of totality. Indra is the source of all energy. The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa says that the Puruṣa residing in the right eye is Indra; him they call Indra because he has enkindled all that exists[6] Indra is called Vāk (speech). That which has its smoke going upwards and burns is Indra[7]

Indra is identified with sun at many places in the Vedic literature and specially in the Brāhmanas Certain scholars hold the view that Indra phenomenally denotes sun The Śatapatha Brāhmana says that this Indra is sun and that which illumines is Indra Jaiminīya Brāhmana also asserts the same view[8] Indra is the light of lights, the bright lustre is Indra[9] Indra is Brahma[10] The supreme light is Prajāpati or Indra[11] Indra is identified with prāna,[12] hṛdaya[13] and manas.[14] Indra is

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4 Śat B, 1 5 1 33 Indro yajñasyātmā, Indro devatā
5 Ibid 3 4 2 2 1 6 3 22
6 Ibid, 14 6 11 2
7. Ibid, 2 3 2 11 Atha yatraitatpradīpto bhavati uccairdhūmaḥ paramayā jūtya balbalīti tarhi haiṣa (Agnih) bhavatindraḥ.
8 Ibid, 8 5 3 2 Atha yaḥ sa Indro'sau sa Ādityaḥ
Ibid, 4 5 5 7 Eṣa vai sukro ya eṣa (sūryaḥ) tapatyeṣa (sūryaḥ) u evendraḥ
Ibid, 4 6 7 11 Indra iti byetmācakṣate ya eṣa (sūryah) tapati
Jai. B sa yassa Indra eṣa eva sa ya eṣa (sūryyaḥ) eva tapati.
9. Kou B, 14 1 Indro jyotirjyotiḥ
Śat. B. 12 9.1 12 Yat śuklam tadaindram
10. Ibid. Tasmādāhendro Brahmeti.
11. Ibid., 2 3 1 7 Yat param bhāḥ prajāpatirvā sa Indro vā
12. Ibid, 12 9.1 14, 6 1,2,28 Prāṇa evendraḥ, Prāṇa Indraḥ
13. Ibid, 12.9 1 15; Hṛdayamevendraḥ,
14. Ibid, 19.9 1.13; Mana evendraḥ.
Go. B. Yanmanaḥ sa Indraḥ.

is vigour.[15] Indrá is strength and the lord of strength;[16] Indra resides in strength.[17]

Indra is regarded as the foremost among the gods even in the Brāhmaṇas. The gods declared that Indra is the best among them.[18] All the gods reside in Indra. Indra is the most illustrious, the strongest and the best among Gods, and so became their lord [19] Indra is supposed to be assisted and accompanied by the Maruts[20] and the Rudras.[21] Indra is identified with Arjuna in the Brāhmaṇa. Further it is said that the heaven is Indra.[22] In the Marutvatīya Śāstra in the Aitareya Brāhmana, the Maruts are called the best friends of Indra whom they supported and helped when he wanted to slay Vṛtra

"When Indra had slain Vṛtra, all the deities left him, thinking he has not laid him low, the Maruts alone his true comrades are the breaths; the breaths did not then leave him" [23]

We would like to draw the attention of the scholars to a statement of the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa that Indra calls on Maruts staying on Aśvattha tree. Aśvattha is used as a symbol for the 'cosmos' in the Upanisads If we understand Maruts as breaths representing the 'Vāyu' in the macrocosm and the Prāna śakti (Prāna, Apāna, Vyāna, etc) in the microcosom, Indra clearly stands for the controller of this prevailing force (Maruts) and would be technically designated as the individual soul and the universal soul [24]

In the Niṣkaivalya Śāstra there is a reference to Gods seeking their desire from Indra's wife named Prāsahā.[25] 'Here is the dear wife, the favourite of Indra, Prāsahā by name

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15 Ś B 12 9 1 16 Śiśnamindraḥ, Ibid 12.8 1 17 Reta Indraḥ
Tan. B 9 7 5.8 Vīryam vā Indraḥ
T B 1 7 2 2 Vīryamindraḥ

16. Ś B 11 4 3 12 Indro balam balapatiḥ.

17 T B 3 10 8 8 Indro me bale sritaḥ

18. Ś B 12 3 1.3 Indraḥ khalu vai śreṣṭho devatānāmupade scanatā.
Ibid , 14 6.3.3 Te (devāh) hocūḥ Indro vai no vīryavattamaḥ.

19. T B 2 2 10 3 Tato vā Indro devānāmadhipatirabhavat

20, Ś B. 3 4.2 1

21. Ait B. 1 24

22. Kau. B. 16.8

23. Ait. B. 3 16

24 Kath. Up II. 3.1

25. Ait. B. 3.22

From her, let us seek our heart's desire.' This name (Prāsahā) for Indra's spouse could be significantly understood if we think of the association of Indra with Sahas, the strength. Senā denoting force, is another name for Indra's wife occurring in the Brāhmana literature.[26] In Ait. B 3.22 Sena and Prāsahā are both called the wives of Indra.[27] In the Tai. B. the earth is called Sena and Senā, Prāsahā and Indrānī are the names for the wives of Indra[28] The Śat. B describes Indrāṇī as Indra's dear wife who has a head dress of all forms.[29] The Brāhmaṇa here has figuratively suggested the idea of 'Indra māyābhirpururūparīyate', because Indrāṇī stands for the power of Indra as Śakti of Puruṣa and its manifestation is of various forms.

All the Brāhmaṇas give an account of Vṛtra's slaying by Indra Tait B. says 'Indra having killed Vṛtra increased with gods in power [30] The Śatapatha also presents this anecdote and derives the word Vrtra thus, 'In truth, Vṛtra lays covering all this (space) which here extends between heaven and earth and because he lay covering (Vṛ) all this, therefore his name is Vṛtra Him Indra slew. (vṛtro ha vā idaṁ sarvvam vvṛtvā śissye Yadidamantareṇa dyāvaapṛthivī sa yadidam sarvvam vvṛtvā śiśśye tasmādvṛtro nāma Tamindro jaghāna) Vṛtra is killed with his thunder bolt by Indra [32] In the Ś B 1 6 4 1-2, there is a reference to the self-concealment of Indra after hurling the thunderbolt at Vṛtra

Ait B says, by purified butter as a thunderbolt Indra slew Vṛtra [33] By means of Agni and Soma Indra slew Vṛtra [34] When Indra had slain Vrtra all the deities left him, thinking 'He has not laid (him) low;' the Maruts only his true comrades,

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26. Go Up B 2 9 Senendrasya patnī
27 Ait B 3 22 Senā vā Indrasya priyā jāyā vāvātā prāsahā nāma
28. Tai B 2 4 2 7
29 Ś B 14 2 1 8 Indrānī ha vai Indrasya priyā patnī Tasyāḥ uśnīśo viśvarūpatābhaḥ
30 Tai B 1 6 1 7
31 Ś B 1 1.3.4 Vṛtro ha vā sarvam vvṛtvā śissye. Yadidamantreṇa dyāvapṛthvī sa yadidaṃ sarvvam vvṛtvā śissye tasmādvṛtro nāma. Tamindro jaghāna
32. Ś B 1 2 4 1 Indro ha yatra vvṛtrāya vvajram prajabāra
33. Ait. B 1.26
34. Ibid , 2 3

did not leave.[35] Indra having slain Vṛtra became Viśvakarman.[36] At another place[37] it is said that 'the fifteen kindling verses recited in the Soma sacrifice are a thunderbolt and the thunderbolt is thus fifteenfold. The invitatory and offering verses of the oblation are Triṣṭubh verses; the Triṣṭubh is a thunderbolt'. Here the killing of Vṛtra is ascribed to the various constituents of the sacrifice The Śat B V, 2.3 7 says that by preparing a cake on eleven potsherds for Agni and Soma, and offering it in the same way as an (ordinary) iṣṭi, Indra slew Vṛtra and thereby gained that universal conquest which now is his And in like manner does this king or the sacrificer (Indra's victory over Vṛtra is an ideal example to the kings) thereby slay his wicked hateful enemy, and in like manner does he gain the victory.

According to the Śatapatha Brāhmana Vṛtra stands for sin. It states when Indra had slain Vṛtra, he burnt him completely by means of Agni Vaiśvānara, and thereby burnt all his sin, and in the same way does that (sacrificer) now slay Vṛtra in the form of sin with the help of Vṛtrahan.[38] Thus the Brāhmana gives the Ādhyātmika interpretation of Vṛtra Vṛtra is the concealer of 'good' in man (Vṛnotīti) and personifies sin It is through Indra, the power of the soul at the microcosmic level, that the sin can be destroyed. This idea is thus expressed in the Kenopaniṣad, 'through the self one attains strength (Ātmanā vindate vīryam)

Slaying of Namuci by Indra finds repeated allegorical expression in the Brāhmana texts. Brāhmaṇa however explains that this symbolic fight stands for the strife between good and evil 'Now Namuci is evil, a hateful enemy. Indra wrested from him his energy, or vital power. Moreover it was with foam of water that Indra severed the head of Namuci' [39]

The 'form of waters' seems to mean the best of vigour because 'waters' are explained as vigour as well as cosmic

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35 Ait. B. 3,16
36 Ait B 4, 22
37. Ibid., 7.2
38 Ś.B 11.1 5.8
39. Ibid , 12.7 3 4 Pāppmā vai namuciḥ pāppmānaṁ vvāva taddviṣantambhrātṛvvyam hatvendriyam vvīryamasyāvṛṅkta

energy in the Brāhmaṇas[40] or philosophically the foam of water may mean the highest type of spiritual contemplation.

Indra smits the Rākṣasas. These fights of Indra with demons and fiends are variously and at length detailed in the different Brāhmaṇa-texts In the Upaniṣads we find the philosophical speculations based on these battles whereas in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas they are recounted in great details with variations of style by the ancient ethnographers of the epic and the Purānas An ethnographer is the prisoner of his literary and philosophical training; so inspite of an orderly tabulation of the theme they underwent some changes as to relate to the new contexts of the epic and the Purānas

In the Brāhmaṇa literature Indra is repeatedly described as the symbol of vigour and energy 'Indra is vigour and energy[41] Indra is the greatest of the charioteers[42] Indra is equal to all gods[43] He is the irresistible car-fighter Indra is the highest, mightiest and strongest of gods and he, assisted by Brhsapati fights the Asuras The gods collect around Indra '[44] In the Aitareya Brāhmana the identity of Indra with Varuna and Maruts is established in a ritualistic design.[45] Further the divine kingship of Indra is also proclaimed[46]

The great anointing or the Mahābhiṣeka of Indra is described in the Aitareya Brāhmana The gods with Prajāpati said, 'He of the gods is the mightiest, the most powerful, the strongest, the truest and the most accomplished; let us anoint him'. 'Be it so' they replied Thus they did anoint Indra For him they brought together the throne called Ṛk, as its two front feet they made the Bṛhat and the Rathantara, as its two back feet the Vairūpa and the Vairāja, as the head and foot planks the Śakvara and the Raivata, as the cross (planks) the Naudhasa and Kāleya, as the lengthwise the Ṛk verses, as the crossties the sāmans, as the holes the Yajus, as the coverlet glory, as the pillow prosperity. Sāvitri and Bṛahspati suppor-

40 Ś B 5 3 4 1 Vīryam vā āpaḥ.
Ibid, 1 1.1 17 Vajro vā āpaḥ
Ibid, 10 6 5 2 Āpo vā arkaḥ

41. Ibid., 2,5 4 8, 3 9.1 15

42 Ibid, 8 7 3 7

43. Ibid., 8 7 3 8

44 Ibid., 8 7 1,6

45. Ait Br 5 4

46. Ibid, 5 5

ted its front feet, Vāyu and Pūṣan the back feet, Mitra and Varuṇa the head (planks), the Aśvins the cross (planks). He mounted this throne. And when he was seated all the gods proclaimed him as a paramount ruler and father of paramount rulers, as self ruler and self rule, as sovereign and sovereignty, as king and father of kings, as supreme lord and supreme authority They say, "The lordly power has been born, the suzerain of all creation has been born, the eater of the folk hath been born, the breaker of citadels has been born, the slayer of the Asuras hath been born, the guardian of the holy power has been born, the guardian of the law hath been born". After this Prajāpati, anointed him with the verse:

"Varuna within the Waters

Hath set him down, preserving order,

For overlordship, for paramount rule, for self rule, for sovereignty for supreme authority, for kingship, for suzerainty, for supremacy, for pre-eminence, the wise one". Then follow the other particulars of the rite and it is said in the end, 'Anointed with this great anointment Indra won all victories, found all the worlds, attained the superiority, pre-eminence and supremacy over all the gods, and having won the overlordship, the paramount rule, the self rule, the sovereignty, the supreme authority, the kingship, the great kingship, the suzerainty in this world, self-existing, self-ruling, immortal, in yonder world of heaven, having obtained all desires he became immortal.[47] In the following chapters is given the description of the coronation of kings, on analogical lines. Indra is in fact regarded as the archetypal symbol of a king.[48] Says the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, 'with a horse chariot Indra ran to the battle with a resounding sound, a personification of Kṣatram as if' [49] Regarding this Julius Eggling remarks that Indra is the valiant hero, for ever battling with the dark

47. Ait. B 8,12
48. Tai. B. 3 8 23 2 Aindro vai rājanyaḥ.
Ś B 10 4.1 5; 2 5.2 27, 2 5 4 8, 3.9 1.16 rudraḥ kṣatram.
Kau B 12 8 and Tai B 3 9 16 3 Kṣatram vā Indraḥ
49 Ait. B. 4.9 Aśvarathendra ājimadhāvat sā uccairghoṣa upabdimānkṣatrasya rūpam

powers of the sky is not less appropriate representative of the kingly order.

Indra is the representative of kingly power is the Ādhibautika (socialistic) interpretation of the deity The anointing of Indra as a king also occurs in the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa. Indra is also called Arjuna which according to the Brāhmaṇa, is his mystic name.[50] When Agni and Indra are jointly addressed the Brāhmaṇa says that Indra and Agni were created as the brāhmaṇa (priesthood) and the ksatra (nobility). The brāhmaṇa was Agni and the kṣatra Indra[51] The Brāhmaṇas are devoted to the delineation of sacrifice but in an attempt at explaining the sacrifice they furnish us with uncomparable suggestions about the different aspects of the deities The Tait B 1 7.3 gives the order of the recipients of jewels (Ratninah) at the time of the anointing of the king at whose houses the oblations are performed on successive days Now these recipients of jewels or the sacrificial honours on the part of the newly consecrated king are associated with different deities, which we think explains the ādhibhautika (the social) meaning of these deities. The text says that 'ratnahavis' or 'ratnīnām havīmsi' are performed on successive days as follows 1. Brāhmaṇa priest (a pap to Bṛhspati), 2 Rājanya (a cake of eleven kapalas to Indra), 3 Consecrated Queen (pap to Aditi), 4. The king's favourite wife (pap to Bhaga), 5 A discarded wife (pap to Nirṛti), 6. Commander of the army (cake of eight potsherds to Agni); 7 Śuta-charioteer (cake of ten potsherds to Varuṇa); 8. Grāmiṇī (cake of seven potsherds to Maruts), 9 Ksatri, (cake of twelve potsherds to Savitri); 10 Saṁgrahītṛ, treasurer (cake of two potsherds to Asvins), 11 Bhāgadugh, collector of taxes (pap to pūṣan), 12. Akṣāvapa, dyūtakara, superintendent of gambling (gavīdhuk pap to Rudra). Finally the king offers in his own house two cake oblations of eleven potsherds to Indra Sūtrāman (the good protector) and Indra Aṁhomuk (the deliverer from trouble). These two epithets Sūtrāman and Aṁhamuk are of great significance Indra is repeatedly called Sūtrāman

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50 Ś B, 5 4 3 7 Arjuno ha vai nāmendro yadasya guhyam nāma.
51 Ibid., 10 4 1 5

in the Brāhmaṇas. Indra is glorified as the axial point of all existence in the Vedas has been examined before In the Brāhmaṇic literature also he is conceived as the central power and the guardian of the whole universe. He shields against all agonies and calamities

The Brāhmaṇas not only expound and elucidate the sacrifices of various types but also the different objects used therein and their significance. The sacrifice and the objects used have a symbolic value. We give below one instance where the tiger skin in relation to Indra in the ritual symbolizes prowess, tenacity and heroism. Ś B V.3 4.3 says, "he spreads a tiger skin in front of the Mitrāvaruṇā's hearth, with 'thou art Soma's beauty For when Soma flowed through Indra, he (Indra) thereupon became a tiger therefore he is Soma's beauty , this is why he says, Thou art Soma's splendour—may my beauty become like unto thee. He thus bestows the tiger's beauty on him ? Therefore he says, 'May my beauty become like unto thine" The tiger's skin symbolizes the valor and beauty because Indra is supposed to become a tiger (strong) at drinking Soma and beauty imparted by Soma is not of the features but of valor and strength This also signifies and clarifies the importance of Soma-drinking by Indra before killing Vṛtra. Soma is even called the princely power (kṣatra),[52] the vital airs and the breath.[53] Soma is described as the nectar of immortality Soma contributes to joy and is considered to be the seed of vigorous steed.

As stated above, the Brāhmaṇas regard Indra as the best among gods or as the lord of the gods Moreover curious stories occur in the Brāhmanas regarding Indra The Tai. B. relates that Prajāpati created gods and Asuras, but he did not create Indra. The Gods said to him, 'Create Indra for us'. He replied, 'As I have created you through austere fervour (tapas) so do you generate Indra. They practised austere fervour and saw Indra within themselves They said to him, 'Be born'. He said 'To what lot shall I be born?' They replied, 'To the seasons, the years, the creatures, the beasts,

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52. Ś. B. 14 1.3 12. Ait. B. 2.38
53. Tān. Br. 9.9.1.5

these worlds, etc."[54] This account also signifies that Indra stands for the archetype of the eternal central principle of power and consciousness that is to be visualized even by the gods within their ownselves through contemplation and the same is manifest (born) in everything. The same Brāhmaṇa gives another story which tells us that Prajāpati created Indra last of the gods and sent him to be the lord of the other deities. The gods said to him 'Who art thou? We are superior to thee.' He reported their reply to Prajāpati and asked for splendour which resides in Prajāpati in order that he might become the chief of the gods, etc.[55] Both the stories emphasize that Indra is above and beyond all the Gods Prajāpati is stated to be higher than Indra but at other places (quoted above) Indra is also identified with Prajāpati and Brahmā.

Since ritual is most important in the Brāhmanas we must review Indra's position with relation to it. It is said that the ritual has Indra as its deity.[56] Indra is the soul and the deity of the ritual[57] The Yajña belongs to Indra.[58]

In the ritual oblations are offered to different deities. Indra is offered an oblation consisting of eleven kapāla cake Ś.B. says that ekādaśakapāla puroḍāśa is prepared for Indra at the dwelling of him who is being consecrated (the king), for Indra is the kṣatra (ruling power) and he who is consecrated is the kṣatra. Hence it is for Indra.[59]

The Tai B 1.7.3 also lays down that a cake of eleven kapālas is to be offered to Indra as an oblation Tāṇḍaya Brāhmana also repeats the same[60] This offering (of eleven Kapāla cake) called the 'saṁsrip' oblation is given to Indra at the time of the consecration of Varuna.[61] Indra is offered a pap of red rice in the ceremony of initiation (Dīkṣa). For Indra Jyeṣṭha (the most excellent) is prepared a pap of red rice-grains (hāyana). The Tai S. prescribes a cake prepared of big-rice, Mahāvrīhi, 'thereby Indra, the most excellent,

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54. Tai B, 11 2 3.3
55. Tai B. 11 2 10 1
56 Ait. B 5 34, 6 9, S B 2 1 2 11 Indro yajñasya devatā
57 Ś B 5 5 1 33 Indro yajñasyātmendro devatā.
58 Kau. B 5.34, 6 9, S. B 2 1 21 1, Ait B 6 11 Aindro vai yajñaḥ.
59. S B. 5, 3, 1, 1
60. Tāṇḍ B. 21, 10, 23
61. S. B. 5, 4, 5, 10

leads to excellence or lordship.' The reason is also given, 'as to its being prepared of red rice; outstanding doubtless are those red rice plants, and outstanding is Indra, therefore it is prepared of red rice.[62]

In the Brāhmanic rites the oblation offered to Indra is poured in the southern direction Says the Brāhmaṇa, 'There is either a cake on eleven potshreds for Indra or a rice pap for Soma; this he places on the southern part.[63]

At the full moon sacrifice Indra is offered an additional cake because he is the dispeller of the scorners. The Śatapatha Brāhmana explains it as follows. when the sacrificer has performed the Full-moon sacrifice, he prepares an additional cake for Indra Vimridh (the dispeller of scorners) and offers it in accordance with the procedure of an iṣṭi (after the model of the Full-moon sacrifice), so in order that his sacrifice should become shared in by Indra, for every sacrifice belongs to Indra [64]

At the new-moon ceremony Indra is offered an oblation made of clotted curds.[65]

At the *Pravargya* rite Indra is identified with wind and is offered the main offering in the Pravargya, 'Indra indeed is he who blows here, it is to him he thus offers it.[66]

Moreover, the midday is connected with Indra in Śatapatha, Kauṣītaki, Gopatha, Aitareya and other Brāhmanas [67]

As shown in the beginning of this chapter, Indra is identified with various entities,— earthly and ethereal and is descibed as the supreme unexhaustible force This essential characteristic of Indra is more or less philosophically maintained in the Jaiminīyopaniṣad Brāhmana Indra is identified with 'Aksara', the syllable symbolising the imperishable (One) which flowing (Kṣar) was not exhausted. The Brāhmaṇa text says,[68] "which is that which flowing was not exhausted?" "Indra" "Who is this Indra?" "He who rests in the eye." "Who. is he who rests in the eye." That is Indra, that is Prajāpati.

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62 Ś.B. 5, 3, 3, 6
63 Ibid., 5, 5, 1, 1
64 Ibid, 11, 1, 3, 1-2, 4
65. Ś.B, 11, 1, 4, 3
66. Ibid., 14, 2.2.2-6
67. Kau. B. 5.5, 22 7
68. Jaiminīyopaniṣad B. 14, 1, 8-14

He is the same with the earth, the same with space, the same with the sky He, it is who, must be worshipped as "all this". He who knows this thus becomes bright, steady, tranquil, self possessed, fortunate, omnipresent, celebrated, splendid, radiant, wise, potent, glorious, praiseworthy, active, knower of the sacred syllable, master of senses, possessing the Sāman ' Moreover the Brāhmaṇa quotes the subliminal verse of the Ṛgveda to explain the matter further. "He becomes corresponding in form to every form; such is his form to look upon; Indra through his māyā moves about in many forms, for his ten hundred bay steeds are yoked.[69]

In the next section the Brāhmaṇa presents the idea of Indra's all pervasiveness through a story

A person named Pṛtha Vainya asked the divine mendicants, "Why do they call Indra as Uktha, Ṛk Udgītha, Brahman, Sāman, breath, vyāna or they call him mind, eye, apāna, ear, the learned speak of him in many ways " They answered, "These hymn-composing sages of old are born hither again for the keeping of the Vedas, verily they knowing it, O Vainya, say this, that one and the same person is entered into many places He is the One, rivalless and as Indra sees no rival whatever, he also sees no rival whatever who knows this thus, and also he for whom one knowing thus sings the Udgītha."[70]

Indra is called Udgītha[71] and this significant name of Indra is explained thus, "Yonder sun, that same is *ud* fire is *gi*, the

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69 Jaiminīyopaniṣad B 14, 1, 8-14
Atha kim upāssa iti Akṣarmiti Katamattadakṣarmiti Yatkṣarannākṣīyateti. Katamattat kṣarnnā'kṣīyateti Indra iti Katamassa Indra iti Yo kṣannyati Katamassa yo kṣannamata iti Iyam devateti ho'vāca Yo'yam cakṣuṣi puruṣa eṣa Indra eṣa prajāpatiḥ (Sa) samaḥ pṛthivyā sama ākāsena samo divā samassarveṇa bhūtena Eṣa paro divo dīpyate Eṣa evadam sarvamdityupāsita vyaḥ Sa ya etadevam veda jyotiṣmān pratiṣṭhāvāñchantimānātmāñchrīmān vyāptimān vibhūtimamstejasvī bhāvān prājñavānretasvī yaśasvī stomavān karmavānakṣaravānindriyavān sāmantī bhavati Tadvai tadṛcā'bhyanūcyate
Rūpam rūpampratirūpo babhūva tadasya rūpampraticakṣaṇāya
Indro māyābhiḥ pururūpa īyate yuktā hyasya harayaśśatādeśa

70 T U B , 1 45 6

71. Ibid., 1. 45, 4 Sa eṣa Indra udgīthaḥ.

moon is *tham*. The Sāmans are *ud*, the Ṛks are *gī*, the *yajus* are *tham*. This is the explanation of udgītha with regard to the macrocosm. Now with regard to the microcosm (the self) breath is *ud*, speech is *gī*, mind is *tham*. That is the udgītha with regard to both, the divinities and the self. He who knows thus knows the udgītha (Indra) with regard to both, to the divinities and to the self and becomes free from all sin and falsehood.[72] This symbolic delineation of Indra as Udgītha, that is the support of everything has its philosophical development in the Upaniṣads The Brāhmaṇas present a world of karma or ritualistic workship which results in pleasures ranging from the enjoyment of gross physical objects on earth and in heaven after death to the experience of communion with Brahmā or Hiranyagarbha which is the highest manifestation of the Absolute in the phenomenal universe And this Brahmā, or Hiraṇyagarbha or Prajāpati is Indra in the Brāhmanas Since the manifest is not philosophically different from the Absolute so Indra is described as identified with the Supreme Absolute Entity in the philosophical treatises named Upaniṣads

The words of the Śatapatha Brāhmana[73] that Indra is the Puruṣa of the right eye that gives light to the pupil, are repeated in the Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad 4.4 20, but the latter text sums up that it (Indra) should be realized in one form only, for it is eternal, undecaying, birthless, infinite and beyond all reflex registration

'As a unity only is it to be looked upon, this indemonstra-

72 T U B, 1,57, 7-9
So'sāvādityassa eṣa eva udagnireva gī candramā eva tham Sāmānyeva udṛca eva gī yajūṃṣyeva thamityadhidaivatam Athā'dhyatmam Prāna eva udvāgeva gī mana eva tham Sa eṣo'dhidaivatam cādhyātmam codgīthaḥ Sa ya evametadadhidaivatam cādhyatmam codgīthaman vedaitena hāsya sarveṇodgītambhavatyetsmādu eva sarvasmādāvṛścyate ya evam vidvāṃsamupavadati

73. S B., 14, 6, 11, 2 Bṛh 4, 2, 2
Indho vai nāmaiṣa yo'yam dakṣiṇe'kṣanpuruṣasta vā'etamindh santamindra ityācakṣate parokṣeṇaiva prokṣapriyā evā hi devaḥ pratyakṣadviṣaḥ.

ble, enduring being.[74] We shall see this philosophical concept of the deity in the third and fourth chapters.

VARUṆA IN THE BRĀHMANAS

The Śatapatha Brāhmana while delineating the Abhiṣekanīya or consecration ceremony incidentally points out the spheres of different gods. Thereupon taking hold of the king to be consecrated by the right arm the priest mutters.

May Sāvitṛi quicken thee for (powers of) quickening, Agni for householders, Soma for trees, Bṛahaspati for speech, Indra for lordship, Rudra for cattle, Mitra for truth, Varuna for the lord of the law [75]

Varuna is in the Brāhmana conceived as one who encompasses every object He is the ruler of cosmic order. Since the Brāhmaṇas are mainly devoted to the ritualistic practices, Varuṇa is essentially related with the order or law that works in the correct performance of the ritual and Varuna is the deity who constantly punishes inaccuracies in the ritual with his knots and cords which are repeatedly mentioned in the Brāhmanas [76] The Brāhmanas prescribe the offering of a pap of Barley to liberate creaters from every snare of Varuna.[77] At another place an oblation called Varunapraghāsa is prescribed for deliverance from the noose of Varuṇa and for sound and unblemished living [78]

Varuṇa removes the bad element of the yajña[79] and protects its virtuous element [80] Varuna is vigilant over satya (truth)

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74 Bṛh U 4 4 20
Ikadhaiva nu draṣṭavyametadaprameyam dhruvam
Virajaḥ para ākāśādaja ātmā mahāndhruvaḥ

75. Ś B. 5 3 3 15
Athainam dakṣine bāhāvabhipadya japati
Mitraḥ satyo varune dharmmapatīnām

76 Ibid , 1, 3, 1, 16, 5, 2, 5, 16, 6, 4, 3, 8
Varuṇyo vai granthiḥ. Varuṇyā vā'eṣā yadrajjuḥ. Varuṇyā vai yajñe rajjuḥ
Tai B 3 3 10 1 Vāruno vai pāsaḥ

77 Ś B 5 2.5 16

78 Ibid , 2 5.3 1

79. Tai B 1 2 5. 3 Varuṇena yajñasya uriṣṭam śamayati.

80. Ait B , 3, 38, 7. 5 Varuṇaḥ yajñasya sviṣṭam pāti.

and Anṛta (falsehood).[81] Varuṇa at once seizes hold of a person if the falsehood is committed.[82] He presents an awe-inspiring image with his inflictive and castigatory nooses and chains.

A critical study of the Brāhmaṇas shows that the position of Varuṇa has had no decline at this stage. Varuṇa is regularly offered oblations along with the other deities. We do not agree with Prof. Keith who opines that in the Ṛgveda, while the hymns of creation and the other efforts to arrive at a philosophical account of the universe have besides them the expressions in the hymns to Varuṇa of the prevalence of moral order and the punishment of sin, the latter conception cannot be found in living force any longer in the Brāhmaṇas [83]

As stated before Yajña is symbolic. In the Puruṣa Sūkta, the work of creation is metaphorically called Yajña which is supposed to be extended by the Gods and in the ritualistic conception those were the first rites, that served as a model to the later religious rites and ceremonies. The conception of the gods is posterior to that of the evolution,[85] because the gods represent the forces of the Supreme One, acting together in the cosmos at various levels and the Brāhmaṇas present this vision of the Veda through ritualistic symbology.

The Brāhmanas consider Yajña as a mystic thing (Parokṣaṁ Yajñaḥ)[86] In these rites the position of Varuṇa as a divine symbol of law is well-reckoned The law that guides the rite belongs to Varuṇa A pap of barley[87] and a preparation of cooked black rice in ten potsherds is repeatedly offered to Varuṇa[88] Barley white in colour and black rice are significant.

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81. Tai B 1 2 5 3
82 Ibid, 1 7.2 6 Anṛte khalu vai kriyamāṇe Varuṇo gṛhṇāti.
83 Keith The Philosophy of Veda & Upaniṣad Harvard Oriental Series Vol. 32 p 468
84 RV. 10.90 6; 10 90,16
85. Ibid, 10 129.1 Ibid, 1 130 1
86 Ś B 3 1. 3. 25
87. Tai B. 1.7 2 6 Vāruṇam yavamayam caruṁ nirvapati.
Ś B. 5.2 4. 11, 2 5.2.1, 4 2 1 11,
Tān B. 18.9.17
88. Tai B. 3.1.5.9

The white colour representing light, goodness and welfare illustrates the beneficient aspect of the deity and the black colour signifies the malignant mien of the god of law also shadowing forth as a knot, a snare and a string belonging to the same deity The word 'yava' is explained by the Brāhmana itself in this way that Ardhamāsa Śuklapakṣa belonging to the gods is called *Yava*, for the gods possessed themselves (√yu, to join) of it, and that which belonged to the Asuras is *ayava*, because the Asuras did not possess themselves of it [89] The Yavas,' doubtless, are the first (light) fortnights (pūrvapaksā vai yavāḥ) and the 'ayavas' the latter (dark) fortnights [90] So symbolically Yava stands for brightness and unity. The bright aspect of law is the unifying principle inherent in it The law binds people together. The law of a family binds all the family members together. The tribal law unites the whole tribe together. All the people of a country are united together by a law of the nation and an international law binds nations together for the establishment of peace and human welfare But the black or the malevolent aspect of law is to point out and set apart the offenders of the law So Varuṇa, the god of law is given twofold offering made of barley and black rice. Moreover on the cosmogonic lines, the white barley and the black rice may be suggestive of the two entities, the Being and the Non-being (Ksara and Aksara) that constitute the Becoming. Since Varuṇa is the presiding god of the Becoming connoting the cosmic activity and the Primeval Waters, an offering prepared with white barley and black rice may be considered as symbolically important

A very important sacrifice of the Brāhmanas is the Varunaprag hāsa sacrifice There are three seasonal four-monthly sacrifices performed at the 'parvans' or the commencement of the three seasons (spring, rainy season, and autumn), viz. the Vaiśvadeva generally on the full-moon of Phālguna, the Varunapraghāsa on that of Āṣāḍha and the Śākamedhaḥ on that of Kārtika By means of Vaiśvadeva, Prajāpati produced

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89 Śat. Br 1. 7.2.25

90 Ibid , 8.4 2 11 Pūrvapakṣā vai yavaḥ

living beings and by means of Varuṇapraghāsa ceremony he freed the beings from the noose of Varuṇa. The Śākamedhaḥ, however, is meant to overcome Vṛtra. The Varunapraghāsa ceremony is described at length in the Brāhmaṇas. It is not being repeated here in its descriptive details but the opening words are of significance as an explanation to the performance of this sacrifice 'The beings produced by him (Prajāpati) ate (√ghas) Varuna's barley corn; for originally barley belonged to Varuna And from their eating Varuna's barley the name Varunapraghāsaḥ is derived. Varuṇa seized them for eating barley and on being seized by Varuna, they became, dropsical and they lay and sat down breathing in and breathing out The outbreathing and inbreathing forsook them not, but all the organs of sense forsook them; and owing to these two, the creatures did not perish Prajāpati healed them by means of that oblation, both the creatures that were born and those that were unborn he delivered from Varuna's noose; and his creatures were born without disease and blemish.[91]

It has already been suggested that the barley here signifies Varuna's law and the eating of barley means violation of that. Yavapraghāsa (eating yava) is synonymous to Varunapraghāsa (violating Varuna). The beings are seized in the noose of Varuṇa only after offending the law Moreover it is also made clear that as a result of going against the law, beings may be deprived of all sense organs and suffer greatest physical agony. The Varunapraghāsa offerings, however, seem to stand for the act of repentance which may bring about complete freedom from sin and the noose of Varuṇa

In this ceremony the offerings are made in the southern direction of the fire, with the formula, "whatever sin we have committed in the village and forest, for both in the village and in the forest sin is committed; whatever in society and in our own self, (by whatever we have committed in society, he means to say against man; and by whatever in our ownself he means to say against our sense faculties) whatever sin we have here committed, that we expediate by offering, Svāhā. Whereby he says, 'whatsoever sin we have committed, from all that

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91 Ś. B II 5.2 1-3

we rid ourselves." This passage shows an immense consciousness of the geographical (village and forest) and social law as well as the law of one's own conscience, the inner law.

Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa records an ordeal of balance to be faced after death, that is after leaving this body the man in the other world is weighed in balance to test the good and the bad he has done. 'They place him (the man) on the balance in yonder world; and whichever of the two will rise that he will follow, whether it be the good or the evil And, verily, whosoever knows this mounts the balance even in this world, and escapes being placed on balance in yonder world; for his good deeds rise, and not his evil deeds.[92] It reflects the Brāhmaṇic belief as to the punishments awaiting the guilty in future existence that is the ordeal of judgment of the good and the bad deeds. It is significant that there prevailed a notion of inner judgment

In the same chapter of the Śatapatha Brāhmana (XI 6 1) and in the Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa occurs a story that further elucidates the concept of judgment Bhṛgu, the son of Varuṇa, was so proud that Varuṇa for his improvement made him unconscious and sent his spirit to see the world hereafter According to the Śatapatha Brāhmana,[93] the story relates that the son of Varuna, deemed himself superior to his father Varuna in knowledge. Varuna became aware of this 'He deems himself superior to me in knowledge,' he thought He said, 'Go thou eastwards, my boy, and having seen there what thou shalt see, go thou northwards; and having seen there what thou shalt see, go thou westwards; and having seen there what thou shalt see, go thou northwards; and having seen there what thou shalt see, go thou towards the northern of those two intermediate quarters in front, and tell me then what thou shalt see there.' He then went forth from thence eastwards, and lo, men were dismembering men, hewing off their limbs one by one, and saying, 'This to thee, this to me' He said, 'Horrible' Woe is me. Men here have dismembered men, hewing off their limbs one

92. Ś B 11 2 7 33

93 Ś. B 11 6 Here is given the rendering of the text in English by Prof Julius Eggling

by one.' They replied, 'thus indeed these dealt with us in yonder world, and so we now deal with them in return.' He said, 'Is there no atonement for this ?' 'Yes there is', they replied. 'What is it?' 'Thy father knows'. He went forth from thence southwards, and lo, men were dismembering men, cutting up their limbs one by one, and saying, 'this to thee, this is to me.' He said, 'Horrible! Woe is me. Men here have dismembered men, cutting up their limbs one by one'. They replied, 'Thus indeed they dealt with us in yonder world, and so we now deal with them in return.' He said, 'Is there no atonement for this?—'Yes, there is,' they replied. 'What is it'—'Thy father knows.' He went forth from thence westwards and lo, men sitting still, were being eaten by men, sitting still. He said, 'Horrible ! Woe is me Men, sitting still are eating men sitting still ' They replied, 'thus, indeed, these have dealt with us in yonder world, and so we now deal with them in return'. He said, 'Is there no atonement for this?' 'Yes, there is', they replied.' 'What is it?' 'Thy father knows ' He went forth from thence northwards, and lo, men crying aloud, were being eaten by men, crying aloud, here are eating men, crying aloud. They replied, 'Thus indeed they dealt with us in yonder world, and so we now deal with them in return ' He said, 'Is there no atonement for this?' 'Yes, there is,' they replied 'What is it?' 'Thy father knows ' He went forth from thence towards the northern of those two intermediate quarters in front, and lo, there were two women, one beautiful, one over-beautiful (According to Sāyaṇācārya 'Ati-kalyāṇī' means 'not beautiful' Aśobhanā, ugly. Perhaps its real meaning is 'one of past beauty' one whose beauty has faded), between them stood a man, black, with yellow eyes, and a staff in his hand. On seeing him, terror seized him, and he went home and sat down. His father said to him, 'Study thy day's lesson (of scripture) Why dose thou not study'? 'There is nothing whatever'. Then Varuṇa knew he has indeed seen it. (Varuṇa then explained the significance of all that Bhṛgu had seen). He spoke, 'As to those men whom thou sawest in the eastern region being dismembered by men hewing off their limbs one by one, and saying, "This to me, this to thee" they were the trees; when one puts fire-wood from trees on (the fire) he subdues trees, and conquers the world of trees.

And as to those men whom thou sawest in the southern region being dismembered by men cutting up their limbs one by one, and saying, "This to thee, this to me". They were the cattle; when one makes offering with milk he subdues the cattle, and conquers the world of cattle And to those men thou sawest in the western region who, whilst sitting still were the herbs; when one illumines (the Agnihotra milk) with a straw, he subdues the herbs and conquers the world of herbs And as to those men thou sawest in the northern region who, whilst crying aloud, were being eaten by men crying aloud, they were the waters; when one pours water to (the Agnihotra milk), he subdues the waters and conquers the world of waters. And as to those two women whom thou sawest, one beautiful and one over-beautiful,—the beautiful one is belief When one offers the first libation (of the Agnihotra) he subduses belief, and conquers belief, and the overbeautiful one is unbelief; when one offers the second libation, he subdues unbelief, and conquers unbelief And as to the black man with yellow eyes, who was standing between them with a staff in his hand, he was wrath, when having poured water into the spoon, one pours (the libation into the fire) he subdues wrath, and conquers wrath; and verily whosoever, knowing this offers the Agnihotra, thereby conquers everything, and subdues everything'.

The idea contained in this allegory is that a man does not suffer in the world to come if he has offered the due oblations and performed the rites that is, if he enjoys only what is due to him as a result of his action. The same idea is contained in the Kauṣītaki Brāhmana also The objects do not revenge themselves on man in the next world if he enjoys them after performing the rite in proper form, "He wins them here with morning litany, won here they eat him not in yonder world, they enjoy him not in requital" [94]

According to Prof Keith, the Brāhmanic conception of torment in the other world is inextricably bound up with the correct practice, or the failure to follow the correct practice of

94. Kau. B. 11, 3

the ritual.[95] The Brāhmaṇas cannot however be shunned away as texts containing only ritualistic philosophy and ethics The Brāhmaṇas also explain the symbolism of sacrifice and bring forth the deeper and inner meaning of all these allegorical episodes. To bring home this point, a citation from the Śatapatha Brāhmana is being given below which presents the real meaning of yajña. Janaka of Videha once asked Yājñavalkya, 'do you know the Agnihotra, Yājñavalkya ?'—'I know it, O King,' he said.—'What is it?'—'Milk indeed.' 'If there were no milk, with what would you sacrifice?'—'With rice and barley'—'If there were no rice and barley, how would you sacifice?' —'With the forest herbs'. —'If there were no forest herbs, with what would you sacrifice?' —'With fruit of trees'. 'If there were no fruit of trees, with what would you sacrifice?' —'With water' —'If there were no water, with what would you sacrifice?' He spoke then, 'Indeed, there would be nothing whatsoever here, and yet there would be offered the truth into faith.' 'You know the Agnihotra Yajñavalkya'[96] And this is the sacrifice and this is the ethical import of the Brāhmanas. This is what was taught to Bhṛgu by his father Varuṇa, the mythical symbol of law and judgment Bhṛgu is nobody else but a human being as the Brāhmaṇa says, 'which originated first from the seed of Prajāpati was Āditya representing the five great elements and that what was created as second was Bhṛgu, who on account of being caught by Varuṇa is known as Bhṛguvāruṇiḥ[97]

The efficacy of Varuna myth from moral view point is significant A married woman, who carries an intercourse with a man other than her husband, commits a sin against Varuna. Moreover we find confession of sin makes it less; confessed the sin becomes truth[98]

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95 Keith Harvard Oriental Series Vol 32, p. 473

96 Ś B 11, 3, 1, 2-4
Taddhaitajjanako vvaideḥ yājñavalkyampapraccha vetthāgnihotram yyājñavalkyā'iti. . . . .
...Sa hovāca navā'iha tarhi kiñcanāsīdathaitadahūyataiva satyam śraddhāyāmiti,

97 Ait B. 3.34

98. Ś. B 2.5.2,20.

The Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa present a picture of Varuna. 'The sacrificer offers the last oblation to Varuṇa at the purificatory bath saying, "With to Jumbaka hail" and redeems himself. He offers it on the head of a white spotted, bald headed man with protruding teeth and reddish brown eyes; for that is Varuna's form '[99] This undoubtedly represents the fierce aspect of Varuṇa's character and that white leprosy (Śukla-Chitrin), baldness, protruding teeth and reddish brown eyes (considered inauspicious) are inflicted by Varuṇa So the physical deformities and ugliness are conceived to be the result of one's actions and caused by Varuna.

Varuṇa is identified with Prāṇa,[100] Apāna[101] and Vyāna [102] Varuṇa is called Agni [103] The Śatapatha Brāhmana says when it burns rather brightly, then indeed that (fire) is Varuṇa [104] Bonefire or the violently burning fire is Varuṇa [105] This identity again has its explanation in the violent aspect of Varuna's law according to the Ś.B where Varuna is identified with the burning fire and is described as seizing on the erring creatures with violence.

The Śatapatha unfolds the myth of complementary dualism of Mitra and Varuna on the mental level 'Mitra and Varuṇa are a person's intelligence and will, and as such belonging to his self, whenever he desires anything in his mind, as 'would that this were mine I might do this' That is intelligence, and whatever that is accomplished, that is will. Now intelligence indeed is Mitra, and will is Varuna[106] At another place Varuṇa is designated as the womb, Indra the seed and Savitṛ

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99 Ś B 13 3 6 5, Tai B 3 9 15 3
100 Go B 2, 4, 11 Yah prāṇaḥ sa Varuṇah
101 Ś B 8 4 2 6 Apāno Varunaḥ
102 Ibid , 12 9 1 6 Vyāno Varunaḥ
103. Ibid , 5.2 4 13 Yo vai Varuṇaḥ so'gniḥ
104. 2 3 2 10 Atha yadaitatpradīptataro bhavati, tarhi haiṣa (Agniḥ bhavati Varuṇaḥ).
105. Ait B 3 4
Atha yadagnirghorasamsparsastadasya Vāruṇam rūpam.
106 Ś B 4 1 4 1 Kratūdakṣau ha vā asya mitrāvaruṇau.

the generator of the seed.[107] Jaiminīyopaniṣad Brāhmaṇa however, identifies Varuna with Savitā. It says, 'what is Savitā? What is Sāvitrī? Varuna is Savitā, the waters are sāvitrī. Where Varuṇa is, there the waters are or where the waters are, there is Varuna.[108] Kauṣītaki Brāhmana[109] says that this sun having entered Āpaḥ becomes Varuna. Varuṇa is also called the Saṁvatsara,[110] that is considered to be the fundamental support of all beings.[111] Varuna is also called Śrī.[112]

The northern direction is specially prescribed for Varuna in the sacrifice[113] and the cooked offering is prepared on one potsherd as well as ten potsherds.[114]

This association of the northern direction with Varuna in the Brāhmanas is of importance In the epics and the Purānas Varuṇa is essentially a deity of the western quarter which is supposed to be the region of his rule as a Lokapāla, the protector of a point of heaven This is because in the later mythology Varuṇa was called the god of night which commences as the sun sets in the western direction. Tai. B. 2 2.5.3 speaks of Varuṇa's horse and the word Aśva is symbolic of all cosmic activity or movement (Varunaḥ vai Aśvaḥ) with regard to its etymology and usage in the Vedic poetry.

As pointed out before the Brāhmanas have again and again ascribed the realm of every type of law whether it is civil, criminal, social, ethical, religious, national or international to Varuna and the beings are afraid of Varuna's law. The Brāhmaṇa has however allegorically stated that there should be mutual consideration and respect between the imposer of law and the people on whom it has been imposed. 'Earth was once afraid of Varuṇa, when he had been consecrated, thinking, 'something

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107 Ś B 12, 9, 1, 17 Yonireva Varuṇaḥ Reta Indraḥ Savitaiva retasaḥ prajanayitā

108 Jai U B 4, 27, 3
Kah Savitā kā sāvitrī Varuṇa eva saritāḥ āpaḥ sāvitrī.

109 Kau Br 18 9

110. Ś. B. 4.4.5 18 Saṃvatsaro Varuṇah.

111. Ibid , 8.4 1.23
Saṃvatsaro hi sarveṣām bhūtānāṁ pratiṣṭhā.

112. Kau. B 18 9. Śri vai Varunaḥ.

113 Tai. B. 3.8 20 4 Eṣā (uttarā) Varuṇasya dik.

114. Ś B 4 4 5 15 Vāruṇo Ekakapālam puroḍāśo bhavati.
Tān B. 21 10.23. Vāruṇo daśakapālaḥ (puroḍāśaḥ).

great' surely has he become now that he has been consecrated. I fear lest he may send me asunder And Varuṇa also was afraid of the Earth, thinking, I fear lest she may shake me off Hence by that (formula) he entered into a friendly relation with her; for a mother does not injure her son, nor does a son injure his mother. Now this Rājasūya is Varuṇa's consecration'.[115]

This story of the Brāhmaṇa clarifies two points. Firstly Varuṇa is the holder of the royal law. By the consecration (Rājasūya) of the king it is the law of the king that is established. Secondly when a lawful king is consecrated the subjects get frightened But at the same time the potency of the royal law is proved through its being accepted by the subjects. The law is the king's order and the harmony is established, happiness attained, when the law is expedient to the subjects

Mitra and Varuṇa are called the directors and the arms of the king in the Rājasūya ceremony detailed in the Śatapatha Brāhmana. The king is considered to be the holder of law. This again is set forth through a sacrificial allegory of the Brāhmanic style 'He hath sat down, the upholder of the sacred law, Varuna in the home-steeds, the home-steeds are the people, 'among the subjects he means to say, for supreme rule, he the wise'[116] Varuṇa is called the Dharmapati (the lord of the law)[117]

In Ś B 5 3.5 28 Mitra and Varuna are spoken of as helping the king (Rājanya) to kill Vṛtra, his enemy. In the Indrābhiseka ceremony (the anointing of Indra) it is stated that through Varuna's law Indra had been proclaimed Prajāpati (the lord of subjects)

Varuna within the waters
Hath set him down, preserving order,
For overlordship, for paramount rule, for
self rule, for sovereignty, for supreme authority.
for kingship, for great kingship, for suzerainty,
for supremacy, for pre-eminence, the wise one.[118]

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115 Ś B. 5. 4 3. 20
116. Ibid. 5. 4. 3. 5
117. Ś B 5.3.3-9.
118. Ait. B 8. 13

Mitra and Varuṇa are spoken of as supporting the head planks of the chariot of Indra anointed as the king[119]

Varuṇa is related with law, truth and waters. The relation of truth and waters is thus depicted in the Ś B. which says that the 'truth is the same as the waters, for the waters are the truth Hence they say, 'whereby the waters flow, that is a form of the truth. It is the waters indeed that were made first of this universe, hence when the waters flow, then everything whatsoever exists is produced here He then puts down a lotus leaf (in the centre of the altar site),—the lotus leaf is womb, he thereby puts a womb to it (for Agni to be born from) And again, why he puts down a lotus leaf; the lotus means the waters and this earth is a leaf thereof, even as the lotus leaf here lies spread on the waters Now this same earth is Agni's womb, for, Agni (the fire altar) is this earth since thereof the whole Agni is built up, it is this earth he thus lays down. He lays it down so as not to be separated from the truth, he thereby establishes this earth on the truth; hence this earth is established on the truth ' Anand K Koomaraswamy relates this identity of lotus with waters and the conception of earth resting on the back of the waters to the use of the expanded lotus flower in iconography and architecture as the typical basis or support for a figure or building. He says, 'I allude here to (1) the familiar padmāsana and padmapītha of Indian images and the corresponding "bell capitals" of supporting columns, and (2) to the usual lotus petal mouldings of architectural basements, where by it seems to be implied that the whole building is supported by a widely extended lotus flower that is to say, by the earth; and in the last analysis by the waters.'[120] Lotus symbolizes the Tree of Life This cosmic tree is alluded to have sprung originally from the navel of Varuna, bearing the deities within its branches, (RV. 1 24.7, In the unsupported (sky) King Varuṇa of purified intelligence sets up the top of the tree. Downward are they (the branches) above their base May the rays reside in us) Later the lotus is represented as rising from the naval of Nārāyaṇa or Viṣṇu bearing Brahmā who is called Abjaja and Abjayoni "born of the water born" i.e born of the lotus. The world tree myths

119. Ait. B. 8. 14

120. 'Yakṣas' p. 57

of various forms owe their origine to the 'lotus' symbol and it is opined that, 'the creation myths of the water cosmology (especially the churning of the Ocean, and the world tree myths in its various forms), which are later so conspicuously connected with Viṣṇu, are really inherited from Varuṇa.'[121]

In the Aitareya Brāmana (iii-6) Hiranyadant Baida is cited as saying that the sky is established on the atmosphere, the atmosphere on the earth, the earth on the waters; the waters on truth; truth on the holy power, the holy power on fervour.[122] Keith remarks on this that the waters are, it must be remembered, the primeval elements, they are a fact and they are also based on fact, on truth.[123] The waters also symbolize law With the advent of waters on this earth every thing happens in due and lawful order, in the absence of rain the stronger oppresses the weaker[124] The waters are the reality[125] and are identified with immortality (Amṛtatvam vā Āpaḥ)[126] They are also called Śraddhā, the faith.[127]

The fifth Brāhmaṇa of the tenth Kāṇḍa of the Śatapatha Brāhmana is highly philosophical in its import. This section starts with the words, "Now the doctrines of mystic import" (Athādeśa upaniṣadām) In the same context it is said that all the gods and all the beings are waters (in as much as they are the foundation and ultimate source of the universe and everything is contained therein). Further it is said that he (the Purusa) is in the midst of all waters, endowed with all objects of desire—for all objects of desire are the waters, while possessed of all (objects of) desires he is without desire, for no desire of anything (troubles) him.[128] According to Sāyaṇācārya the Puruṣa referred to here is Ātman, that is the soul of all the gods or devas As stated above, these cosmic waters held in themselves the Ātman qualified with his desire to create and indicate the first stage of the manifestation of the Brahman This stage is delineated in the Nāsadīya

121 Yakṣas, p 36
122 Ait Br 3 6
123. Keith, Harvard Oriental series, Vol 32, p. 472
124 Ś B 11 1 6 26
125 Ibid 7 6 1, 4
126. Ibid 1,9 3.7, Kau B 12. 1
127 Tai Br. 3. 2 4. 1
128. Ś. B. 10. 5. 4. 15

Sūkta, the Hiraṇyagarbha Sūkta, the Vāk Sūkta and the other cosmogonic hymns as has been explained in the first chapter. Varuṇa is the lord of these waters, the primeval matter or Prakṛti. The divine will refers to the conscious principal working in the cosmos or evolution; This Divine Will manifested in the cosmos is called the divine law or the Ṛta. Thus the cosmogonic waters as well as the the cosmic law, i e. *Āpaḥ* and *Ṛta* both belong to god Varuna.

To quote B G Tilak, "the waters or the watery vapours do not mean the waters in the clouds but the watery vapours which fill the universe and form the material out of which the latter was created "[129] Moreover these waters identical to the cosmic order as pointed out before also explain the name of the Devatā who is identified with these waters In the hymns of the Veda and in the Brāhmaṇas these waters are described as the covering ·

'In the beginning darkness existed enveloped in darkness. All this was undistinguishable water '[130] Says the Manusmṛti I 8, and 10), 'Wishing to create various beings from his own body, he first created water having intended it and he cast his seed in it' and 'Waters are called Nārā for they are the issue or product of Nara (the Supreme Puruṣa), and because they were his first abode, therefore he is called Nārāyana' The Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa refers to these waters while explaining the creation of the universe and says: 'It pervaded everything here; and because it pervaded whatsoever there was here, therefore is called water (Āpaḥ); and because it covered (Var) therefore it is called water (Var)' [131]

Now the term Varuna has also been explained in the Brāhmana in the same way, i.e. Varuṇa is one who has enveloped every thing, being Varaṇa he is mystically called Varuṇa because the gods love mysticism [132] Thus we find that the cosmic waters are identified with Varuna indicating that Varuṇa deno-

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129. Tilak. Arctic Home. p. 269.

130 RV. 10, 129, 3

131. Ś.B. 6,1,1,9

132 Gopatha Bra. 1, 1, 7, (Āpaḥ) yacca vṛtvā'tiṣṭhantadvaraṇo' bhavattam vā etam Varaṇam Santam Varuṇa ityācakṣate parokṣeṇa. Prokṣapriyā iva hi devā bhavanti pratyakṣadviṣaḥ.

tes the Prakṛti or the Virāt or the cosmic energy which is also called Kṣara in the language of Bhagvadgītā in relation to Akṣara, the Puruṣa.

Moreover the association of Varuṇa with darkness metaphorically called night, is also explained by the above quoted line of the Nāsadīya Sūkta, where the darkness and waters are used in a self same fashion

'Gloom hid in gloom existed first—one sea, eluding view'. There is no doubt that the evolution has its origin in the Supreme Being or Parama Puruṣa but the latter is also enveloped by the former which on account of this enveloping aspect is metaphorically called the night or darkness. Therefore Varuna is associated with night in the Brāhmaṇas. The Ait B says that Rātri is Varuna [133] 'Rātri belongs to Varuna'. says the Tai B.[134] The black colour belongs to Varuna [135] Rātri or Naktā is explained as Avyaktarūpa, of indistinguishable form [136] The cosmic truth or Ṛta is also of indistinguishable form The universal order or the Cosmic Truth conceals the Eternal Truth and presents to the human eye the world of names and forms, the outcome of the Virat, which is appropriately called the wife of Varuna in the Brāhmanas [137] The Āpah are also called the wives of Varuna.[138] These waters came out from the Supreme as he practised the austere penance which is known as the Supreme desire of becoming manifold [139] From this Tapas flow out the primeval waters that become further unfolded as the unmanifest (Apraketa) and the manifest waters or matter Varuṇa is the symbol (Devatā of the unmanifest as well as the manifest cosmic enquiry The Vedas, the Brāhmnas, the Upaniṣads, the Mahābhārata and the Purānas pronounce the same truth thorough allegorical and mythical expressions

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133 Ait B 4, 10 Tāṇḍya B 25 10 10
134 Tai B 1 7 10, 1
135 S B 5 2 5 17
136 Nirukta, 8, 10 Bṛhaddevatā, 3, 9
137 G B 2 2 9 Virāḍ Varuṇasya patnī
139 Tai B 1 1 3 8 Āpo Varunasya patnya āsan
140 Tait A 8 6 Tapastaptve'am sarvamasṛjata
Mun Up 1. 1. 9 Yasya jñānamaya tapaḥ
Says Sāyaṇācārya on RV 10 190. 1
Tapaścātra sraṣṭavyaparyālocana lakṣaṇam

3

INDRA AND VARUṆA IN THE ĀRAṆYAKAS

The Āranyakas or 'the Treatises of the Forest' present secret explanations of the ritual. Sāyanācārya says in the preface to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa that the Brāhmaṇa moulded to the observances of a forest is the Āranyaka[1] and in the preface to the Aitereyāranyaka he observes that the Āraṇyaka is so called because it is to be read in the forest[2] The Āraṇyakas presuppose the existence of the Brāhmanas. In the Āraynakas we find, all the details given almost in the same words as in the Brāhmaṇa, but magnified with many additions with respect to the philosophical speculations and disputations. The Āranyakas regard the various rites explained in the Brāhmanas as but symbols for meditation These texts were indeed intended for the Vānaprasthins who after having performed all the duties of a student and a house-holder, retire from the active life of world to the peaceful forest to concentrate on the contemplation of the Reality. In the Āraṇyakas we find the process of development of the philosophical doctrines of the Upaniṣads Thus the Āraṇyakas have their origin in the philosophical discussions of the Brāhmaṇas and find their culmination in the Upaniṣads and represent the transitional phase between the ritualistic symbolism of the Brāhmaṇas and the philosophical doctrines of the Upaniṣads. Such being the nature of these Āraṇyaka-texts we shall briefly review them with regard to their vision of Indra and Varuṇa.

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1. Āranyakavratarūpaṁ Brāhmaṇa.
2 Aitareyabrāhmaṇe'sti kāṇḍamāraṇyakābhidham.
Aranya eva paṭhyaṁ syādāraṇyakamitīryatām.
Sāyaṇa on Taittirīyāraṇyaka :
Araṇyadhyayenādetadāraṇyakamitīryate.
Araṇye tadadhīyītetyevam vākyaṁ pracakṣate,

INDRA IN THE ĀRAṆYAKAS

The Aitareyāraṇyaka speaks of Indra's form as the form of the day and as a symbol of strength, greatness and largeness To quote the text "the slaying of Vṛtra is a characteristic of Indra; this day is Indra's, and Indra's is the form of this day. (There is the word strong) in the verse, 'you are strong by insight, O Soma, you are mighty in your might and greatness, might indeed is a characteristic of Indra; this day is Indra's, and Indra's is the form of this day. (There is the word strong) in the verse, 'They fill full the waters, they lead forth the strong one like a horse for rain; strength indeed is a characteristic of Indra, this day is Indra's and Indra's is the form of this day. Further there in the verse, 'They milk the thundering, never failing spring, (there is the word thundering), thundering indeed is a characteristic of Indra, this day is Indra's and Indra is the form of this day (There is the word 'great') in the verse 'To great Indra'; what indeed is great, is large, the form of this day as endowed with largeness is perfect, and that is the form of Indra."[3]

Indra is manifested in the brightness of the day, the thundering of the clouds, the flowing of the waters and the richness and perfection of nature. He is significantly called the unceasing source (Utsamakṣitam) of the entire cosmic activity.

Ait. Ar relates that Viśvāmitra recited a thousand Bṛhatis (eulogising verses) three times to propitiate Indra, who was very pleased at this and told Viśvāmitra to ask a boon. At this Viśvāmitra said, 'let me know thee' Indra replied, 'I am breath, thou, seer, art breath, all creatures are breath, he that shines is breath. In this form, I pervade all the quarters.

3 Ait Ār, I 2 1

... Indrasya rūpamaindrametadaharetasyāhno rūpam. Atho utsam duhanti stanayantamakṣitamiti stanayadvā Indrasya rūpamaindrametadaharetasyāhno rūpam Pra va Indrāya Bṛhata iti yadvai bṛhattanmahanmahadvadrūpasmṛddhametasyahno rūpam...rūpam

This my food is my friend, my support. This is the food of Viśvāmitra. I am he that shines'.[4]

Indra thus revealed himself to Viśvāmitra as Prāṇātmā or the Āditya, the sun that has pervaded everything as Prāṇa.[5] In the next section of the same Āraṇyaka Indra revealed himself to Viśvāmitrā and Bhāradvāja as the 'Sound' of which a body is conceived of. 'The consonants are the body, the vowels the soul, the sibilants the breath'. Indra proclaimed this to Viśvāmitra, Indra proclaimed this to Bhārdvāja, so Indra is in sacrifices invoked by him as a friend. (Another symbolism is adopted to set forth the same truth). They make up the nights by the consonants, the days by the vowels. This is produced (or manifested) as a thousand Bṛhatīs (symbolic of Śabda). After this is produced as a thousand Bṛhatīs, he who knows this becomes full of knowledge of the gods. What I am, he is; what he is, I am. To sum up a verse from the Ṛgveda (1 115 1) is quoted where the Ṛṣi says, 'the sun is the self of all that moves or stands. Let one consider this'.[6] An attempt has been made to explain the identification of the Śabdātmā, the Prāṇātmā, and the spirit with in the sun; that is, the same soul is to be perceived as manifested in various forms. This is what Indra revealed of himself to Viśvāmitra and Bhārdvāja who were able to see themselves as one with that in the sun after they realized this truth.

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4. Ait Ār 2.3 3
Viśvāmitram hyetadahaḥ śamśiṣyantamindra upaniṣasasāda sa hānnam . .Sa hovāca tvāmeva janīyāmiti tamindra uvāca prāṇo vā ahamasmyṛṣe prāṇastvam prāṇaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni prāṇo hyeṣa sa eṣa tapati sa etena rūpeṇa sarvā diṣo viṣṭo'smi tasya ye'nnam mitram dakṣiṇam tadvaitvāmitrameṣa tapannevāsmīti hovāca

5 Says Sāyana commenting upon the above referred paragraph, Tādṛgannam prāpyādityarūpeṇa sarvadā loke tapanneṣa evāsmīty-evaṁ dhyānadṛṣṭisiddham svakīyaṁ rūpamindraḥ provāca.

6. Ait. Ār. 2 2.4.
. .Tadvā idaṃ bṛhatīsahasraṁ sampannaṁ tasya vā etasya bṛhatī-sahasrasya sampannasya parastātprajñāmayo devatāmayo brahma-mayo'mṛtamayaḥ saṁbhūya devatā apyeti ya evam veda. Tadyo'-ham so'sau yo'sau so'ham. Taduktamṛṣiṇā...sūrya ātmā jagatastas-thuṣaśceti. Etadu haivopekṣetopekṣeta.

The Śāṅkhāyana Āraṇyaka weaves a beautiful dialogue between Indra and Viśvāmitra in which Indra says to Viśvāmitta when the latter desires to know Indra's form, "I am the Great and his Greatness, I am the God and the Goddess; I am the Brahma and His Power."[7]

Indra is depicted as an individual soul and its identity with the Supreme soul is suggested In the Śāṅkhāyana Āranyaka the concept occurring in the Kenopaniṣad that through Ātmā the real strength is attained (Ātmanā vindate vīryam) finds an expression. The souls (individual souls) nourish themselves with the supreme soul and as long as Indra (the individual soul) did not realize this, the Asuras overcame him When he came to know It (Ātman), he having defeated all the Asuras became the best among the gods and attained his kingdom.[8]

Again the dialogue between Pratardana and Indra is very significant. When granted a boon, Pratardana requested Indra to tell him what he thought to be the most beneficial for a human being Indra told to Pratardana, "Know me, I consider this to be the most profitable for a human being"[9] Further Indra told him, "I am the Prāna, the Prajñātmā It is Prāṇa, through whom all the beings are living. This Prāṇa or Prajñā is identical to the supreme Ātman. This Prāna or Prajñātmā is endless, undecaying and eternal and does not become good by good action or bad by a bad action and is thus beyond any change It is the Lokapāla (guardian of the world), the lord

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7 Śank. Ār, 1 6
Viśvāmitro havā Indrasya priyam dhāmopajagama tvāmeveti tam hendra uvāca mahāmśca mahatī cāsmi devaśca devī cāsmi brahma ca brāhmaṇī cāsmīti

8. Ibid, 6 20
Ātmāna etamātmānam bhuñjanti sa yāvaddha vā Indra etamātmānam na vijajñe tāvadenamasurā abhibabhūvuḥ sa yadā vijajñe'tha hatvā'surānvijitya sarveṣām ca devānam śreṣṭhyam svārājyamādhipatyam paryet.

9 Ibid, 5 . Tam hendra uvāca. māmeva vijānīhyetadevāhaṁ manuṣyāya hitatamam manye.

of world and the ruler of the world. Know this to be myself, know this to be myself."[10]

The Taittirīyāraṇyaka delineates the ten-fold manifestations of Indra. The seer who realizes Indra in his heart thus describes it, 'I know the Indra's self, that is self-effulgent, illuminating and beautiful, as moving in ten-fold ways. I look at him as moving with mind (desire of creating the world) in this ocean where the creater attained him (as the means of creation;—the idea is that of the Puruṣa Sūkta of the Saṁhitās). He, the ruler, has entered all the beings. He being one, moves in various forms. In him a hundred luminaries (the sun, moon and others) become one In him all the Vedas attain oneness All the sacrificers become one in him. He is the soul of all the beings and can be achieved through meditation [11] This delineation shows that Indra was conceived of as the Supreme Brahma.

On the analogy of the Puruṣa Sūkta, an account of the beginning of creation occurs in the Taittirīyāranyaka as well as in the Aitareyāraṇyaka [12] In the Ait Ār , the metaphysical correspondent of Puruṣa is Ātman,[13] who is, in the end of the chapter, designated as Indra After having created the human body he entered it having split open the top of the skull. That door is called Vidṛti, the place of happiness. There are three dwelling places of him, three dreams, this dwelling place and this and this Born he looked through all beings, to see whether any one wished to proclaim another self. He saw this person only as the most widely extended Brahman I have seen it, so he said. Therefore he was Idandra by name, he

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10 Śank Ār 5
Sa hovāca prāṇo'smi prjñatmā .. . .
. Eva prajñatma'nanto'jaro'mṛto na sādhunā karmaṇā bhūyan-bhavati no evāsādhunā kanīyaneṣa . eṣa lokapāla eṣa lokādhipati-reṣa lokeśaḥ sa ma ātmeti vidyātsa ma ātmeti vidyāt

11 Sāyaṇa says on this,
Mānasīna yogayuktena manasopalabhyo dhavati Tathā ca kathā adhīyate, 'Manasaivedamāptavyam neha nānāsti kiñcana'iti. Tato yoginām mānasapratyakṣagamyatvāt.

12. Taitt. Ār., 3.12 and Ait. Ār., 2 4.

13. The difference pointed out by Deussen.

he was indeed Idandra by name. Him who is Idandra they call Indra mysteriously For the gods love mystry'[14] The same words occur again in the Upaniṣad. Indra is thus portrayed in the Āraṇyaka as the Ātman or the Self, i e. the Supreme Being.

VARUṆA IN THE ĀRAṆYAKAS

Varuṇa and his cosmic waters are also delineated in the Āraṇyakas. Though, there is reference of Varuṇa only at two places in the Aitareya Āraṇyaka, it is highly illuminating. The position of Varuna in the cosmogonic process is given in very clear and exact terms It states that by the Supreme's mind were created the waters and Varuna The waters yield to him faith for good deeds and Varuṇa preserves his offspring by his law. Thus the waters and Varuna serve their parent mind.[15] These waters denote the Prakṛti, the first thing to be evolved at the will of the Supreme At another place it is said, "In the beginning the One Being was this, there was nothing else blinking. He thought (desired), 'Shall I create worlds ? He created these worlds, water, light, and waters" So the waters denote the primeval waters or the primeval matter and Varuna is the mythical symbol of this primeval matter. Both of them were produced at the Supreme's desire of creation and it is metaphysically said above that they came out from His Mind. Thus it is very clear that waters and Varuṇa philosophically stand for becoming or Prakṛti and this is what we have set forth before as the result of our discussion

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14 Ait Ār, 2.4 3
Sa etameva sīmānam vidāryaitayā dvārā prāpadyata Saiṣā vidṛtirnāma dvāstadetannāndanam Tasyo traya āvasathāstrayaḥ svapnā ayamāvasatho'yamāvasātho'yamāvasthaḥ Sa jāto bhūtanyabhivyaikhyatkimihānyam vāvadiṣditi sa etameva puruṣam brahmatatamapaśyat Idamadarśamitīm tasmādidandro nāmedandro ha vai nāma tamidandram santamindra ityācakṣate parokṣeṇa prokṣapriyā iva hi devāḥ

15, Ait Ār, 2 1 7
Manasā Sṛṣṭā āpaśca varuṇaścā'po hāsmai śraddhām saṁnamante pūṇyāya karmaṇe vāṛuṇo'sya prajām dharmeṇa dā'hāraivamete manaḥ pitaram paricarantyāpaṣca varuṇaśca

in the first chapter. These primeval waters are discussed at length in the Āraṇyakas.

As shown before, Indra, is delineated as Brahmā, Svayambhū and Prajāpati in the Āranyakas. From Him have originated these waters So the relation of Indra and Varuṇa in the Āranyakas also is that of the Being and the Becoming, the Purusa and the Prakṛti. Moreover the Āranyakas beautifully depict the principle of complete dependence of Varuṇa or waters on the Puruṣa. Says the Taitt Ār., 'All this, that was produced from the waters (Prakṛti or matter) was as if non-adhesive and dissoluble So it needed the support, that is Prajāpati The Ātman having manifested Itself as the world, entered into the same [16]

Thus Āraṇyakas have very neatly sketched the two gods Indra and Varuṇa and set forth their mutual relationship in the most veritable style.

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16. Taitt. Ār., 1.23
Adbhyo vā idaṁ samabhūt. Tasmādidam sarva brahma svayambhviti. Tasmādidaṁ sarvaṁ śithilamivādhrumivābhavat. Prajāpatirvāva tat. Ātmanātmānaṁ vidhāya. Tadevānuprāviśat.

4

INDRA AND VARUNA IN THE UPANIṢADS

'What' says the author of the Śvetāśvataropaniṣad, 'What shall a man do with hymns who does not know the eternal word of the hymns in the highest heaven, that in which all the gods are absorbed? Those who know it they are blessed". That ultimate unity of reality which was to be perceived through the mythopoeic and mystic veil in the Ṛgveda and which was the goal of all the succeeding speculation is philosophically delineated in the Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads sought an underlying basis for the subjective and the objective in the Universal soul which was identical with the Absolute Brahman, a symbol of that plenary unity where the shackles of the not-self are shattered and one perceives nothing else So these two gods just as the other gods are annihilated by that Eternal word, the One Absolute Brahman. In the Upaniṣads also, Indra and Varuṇa are described as the forces active in the microcosom and the macrocosm, but when the cosmos is denied, they lose their individualities and are identified with the Absolute Brahman.

INDRA IN THE UPANIṢADS

The unity which has been sought for from the very incipience of Indian speculation was achieved in the Upaniṣads. The Aitareyopaniṣad speaks of Indra as the Absolute Self (Ātman). Though it repeats the etymological explanation of Indra given in the Brāhmaṇas yet it is preceded by a vorticist statement of a philosophical idealism that there is naught else than the Self called in the Aitareya Upaniṣad as Indra. The mystic name of the sole self-existent Self is thus delineated in a picturesque fashion.

'Having been born, he looked around on beings. 'What wishes to explain itself here as one different (from me) ?' He

saw this very person as veriest Brahma. 'I have seen it,' said he.

Therefore his name is Idandra (It seeing). Idandra, is verily his name. Him who is Idandra they call 'Indra' cryptically, for the gods are fond of the cryptic, as it were—for the gods are found of the cryptic as it were.'[1]

The same solipsism is set forth in the last chapter of the Aitareyopaniṣad where an answer is given to question,—which one is the Self (Ātman).

He whereby one sees or whereby one hears or whereby one smells odors, or whereby one articulates speech or whereby one discriminates the sweet and the unsweet, that which is heart and mind--that is consciousness, perception, discrimination, intelligence, wisdom, insight, steadfastness, thought, thoughtfullness, impulse, memory conception, purpose, life, desire and will. All these indeed, are appellations of intelligence. He is Brahman; He is Indra; he is Prajāpati; (he is) all these gods, and these five gross elements, namely earth, wind, space, water and light, these things and those born from sweat, and those born from a womb and those born from a sprout; horses, cows, persons, elephants, whatever breathing thing there is here—whether moving or flying, and what is stationary. All this is guided by intelligence and is based on intelligence. The world is guided by intelligence. The basis is intelligence and intelligence is Brahman.[2]

Even in the earliest Upaniṣads the concept that there is unity is clear and we come across various attempts to describe the nature of that Absolute Unifying Principle. In the Kauṣītakī Upaniṣad a story is related where the worthy pupil is Pratardana of Kāśī and the teacher is Indra. It says that the son of Divodāsa, went to the beautiful mansion of Indra.

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1. Ait U. 3.13-14
Sa jāto bhūtānyabhivyaikhyat kimihānyam vāvadiṣaditi Sa etameva puruṣaṁ brahma tatampaṣyat. Idamadarṣamiti. Tasmādidandro nāmedandro ha vai nāma. Tamidandram santamindra ityācakṣate parokṣeṇa. Prokṣapriyā iva hi devāḥ prokṣapriyā iva hi devāḥ.
2. Ibid . 5,1.3

Indra asked him to choose a boon but Pratardana insistantly requested Indra to bestow upon him a boon of his (Indra's) choice. Then Indra whose form is truth said to him, "Verily know me; this I think the best for man, that he should know me I slew the three-headed son of Tvaṣṭṛ. I gave to the wolves the devotees, the Aruṇamukhas; violating many a treaty I slew the hosts of Prahlāda. (I slew) the sons of Puloman in the sky and Kālakañjas on the earth, and not one hair of my head was harmed Who knew me, by no deed so ever is his future bliss harmed, not by theft, not by a Brāhmaṇa's murder, not by a mother's murder, nor by a father's murder, nor, if he wishes to commit sin, departs the bloon from his face '[3] The knowledge that Indra is the power behind all the victories, and is the Supreme source of strength, raises a person above all social stigma.

The idea behind the above given story is that the knowledge of the identity of the individual and the supreme soul obliterates all types of sins Here Indra is identified with the Supreme Soul. Further Indra is said to be the Prāṇa, the cognitive power and immortality. Indra said, "I am *Prāna.* Worship me as identical with knowlege, as life, as immortal, life is Prāṇa, Prāna is life, while Prāna abides in the body so long does life abide By Prāna man obtains in this world immortality, by knowledge he obtains true resolve. He who worships me as life and immortal, reaches his full life in this world, and in the other world attains immortality and becomes indestructible."[4]

The Upaniṣad repeats the words of Āraṇyaka that as long as Indra knew not this Soul, so long the Asuras overcame him When he knew it, then having conquered and slain the Asuras, he attained sovereignty and empire. Thus too is it with him who has this knowledge and having destroyed all sins he attains the pre-eminence of all beings, and sovereignty and empire.[5] Indra is, here, the individual soul conditioned and depicted as the power of action and knowledge engaged in constant struggle in this empirical world but as it realises

3. Kau. U. 3 1
4 Ibid , 3. 2
5 B U 4 20

its true blissful nature it becomes free and has no enemies to fight with. As long as the self is identified with the body it experiences pleasure and pain. This is beautifully presented through a story of Prajāpati and Indra given in the chapters seven to twelve of the Chāndogyopaniṣad. How Maghavan (symbolizing here the individual-self) attains Self-knowledge through the investigation of the three states of the Self in its phenomenal existence. 'Both the gods and the devils heard a statement made by Prajāpati that the Self (Ātman), which is free from evil, ageless, deathless, sorrowless, hungerless, thirstless, whose desire is the Real, whose conception is Real—He should be searched out, Him one should desire to understand He obtains all worlds and all desires who has found out and who understands that Self.[6] The gods and the devils deputed their respeetive leaders, Indra and Virocana, to attain that supreme knowledge from Prajāpati. After they had lived the chaste life of a student of sacred knowledge (Brahmacarya) for thirty-two years, Prajāpati told them that one's own image which one sees when looking into the eye of another is the Self, and that this is also true of the image seen in water or a mirror What the teacher meant is that the Self dwells in all as the seer of seeing; but the students on account of their narrow understanding regard the Ātman or the Self as a shadow and identify It with the body. Virocana, as he understands, teaches the demons that the body alone is the Self and that it alone should be gratified with food, clothes and other worldly objects of enjoyment. So this is the principle of the demons and atheists who are the followers of the demons to identify the Self with the body, as a result of this misconception arising from the analysis of the waking state alone to have the knowledge of the self.

But Indra is not satisfied and he returns to Prajāpati for further explanation. Prajāpati tells to Indra that he who functions in dreams is the Self but Indra is not satisfied because he finds that though the dream-self is free from many of the limitations of the waking state experienced by the physical body, yet it too is a victim of suffering in various forms. Next

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6. Ch. U. 8.7.1.

Prajāpati tells to Indra that he could experience his true Self in dreamless sleep when a man is asleep with senses withdrawn and serene. But this also gave no satisfaction to Indra because even before he had reached the gods, he was face to face with a new difficulty because dreamless sleep represented a state of utter annihilation as it denied not only the objects of experience but the subject as well who is the experiencer. Indra presents this difficulty of his to Prajāpati who realized that there still had remained some impurities in Indra's heart as he could not perceive the truth and instructed him to practise more spiritual disciplines and thus when the last trace of impurity was removed Prajāpati said to Indra that the body is mortal, always possessed by death. It is the abode of the Self, which is immortal and incorporeal. The embodied self is the victim of pleasure and pain So long as one is identified with the body, there is no cessation of pain and pleasure. But neither pleasure nor pain touches one who is not identified with the body.[7] It is in the phenomenal world that the three kinds of body are used by the Self as Its instruments During the waking state the Self uses the gross body to experience gross physical objects. During the dream state It uses the dream body to experience subtle objects During deep sleep It uses the causal body to experience the absence of the subject-object relationship In reality the Self is unattached Thus the knower of the Self moves through the three states of bodily existence as the free witness of their experiences "So does this serene Being arising from his body and reaching the Highest light, appears in His own form (In that state) He is the Highest Person."[8] Here Indra stands for the individual soul that is in reality the Supreme Self (Uttama Puruṣa), the form of which is pure effulgence (Parama jyoti)

The Chāndogyopaniṣad in its second chapter describes the devotional meditations (Sāmopāsanā) related with the Sāmaveda In its twenty-second section are given the meditations on the different notes employed in singing the Sāma hymns (Vinardigunaviśiṣta Sāmopāsanā) It is said that the different notes belong to different deities. The smooth and

7. Ch U 12.1 8. Ibid, 12.3

strong note is chosen for Indra.[9] Further it is said that all vowels belong to the different parts of Indra's body.[10] Indra in the reference stands for Prāṇa, the conscious self.[11] In the Bṛhadāraṇykopaniṣad also Indra is delineated as Prāṇa, the vital force.[12] And immediately in the next statement the Upaniṣad describes him as infinite.[13]

The Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad explains a famous verse of the Ṛgveda,[14] that has been repeated in the other Vedas as well as in the Brāhmanas. It states that this is that meditation on things mutually helpful which Dadhyan, versed in the Atharvan, taught to Aśvins. Perceiving this the Ṛṣi said, 'He transformed himself in accordance with each form; this form of his was to look at (manifested form). Indra appears of manifold nature by his Māyās, for to Him are yoked ten steeds, nay hundred of them. He is the steeds; He is ten, and thousands—many, and infinite That Brahman is without prior or posterior, without interior or exterior. This Self, the perceiver of everything, is Brahman. This is the teaching'. The above quoted extract leaves no doubt about the fact that the Indra of the Vedas is recognised as the Supreme Soul in the Upaniṣads. No clearer assertion than this could be possible to voice this truth Thus in the Upaniṣadas we find the revelation of the soul of the Veda, the greatest and the highest mystic figure of the Veda is presented in an illuminating form in the Upaniṣads.

In the Taitt. U. there is a beautiful prayer addressed to

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9 Ch U 2 22 1 Ślakṣanaṁ balavadindrasya .

10 Ibid 2 22 3 Sarve svarā Indrasyātmanaḥ

11 Śaṅkarācārya says on this, 'Sarve svarā ākārādaya Indrasya balakarmaṇaḥ prānasyātmano dehāvayavasthānīyāḥ '

12 Bṛh U 1 5 12

13. Ibid., 1.5 13

14. Ibid , 2 5 19

Idaṁ vai tanmadhu dadhyaṅṅātharvaṇo'śvibhyāmuvāca. Tadetadṛṣiḥ paśyannavocat.

Rūpaṁ rūpaṁ prati rūpo babhūva, tadasya rūpaṁ praticakṣaṇāya. Indro māyābhiḥ pururūpo īyate yuktā hyasya harayaḥ śatādaśa iti

Ayaṁ vai harayaḥ ayaṁ vai daśa ca sahasrāṇi. bahūni cānantāni ca, tadetada brahmāpūrvamanaparamanantaramabāhyaṁ. Ayamātmā, brahma sarvānubhūḥ ityanuśāsanam.

Indra. 'May he who is the bull (i.e. the foremost) of the Vedic hymns, who assumes all forms, who has sprung from the immortal hymns of the Vedas—May that Indra (the Lord) cheer me with wisdom. O God, may I be the possessor of immortality; May my body be competent (to acquire Self knowledge), may my tongue be exceedingly sweet; may I hear abundantly with my ears Thou art the sheath of Brahman, concealed by (wordly) intelligence. Guard for me what I have learnt.'[15] Indra is the symbol of Brahman; it is the sheath, the resting place of Brahman. That Pure Brahman, concealed by the intelligence of the world (the conception of duality) is called here Indra. In other words Indra is the name of the qualified Brahman (Īśvara) here.

The older Upaniṣads, however, are very composite in character and they contain disconnected explanations of the sacrificial rituals, legends, dialogues, etymologizings which could more properly be included in the Brāhmanas. It is in such portions that Indra occurs as One of the thirty-three gods of Vedic pantheon and represents the god of lightning or thunder, but in spite of these cosmological identifications and speculations Indra is ultimately regarded as identified with Brahman or the Supreme Ātman[16] Indra is spoken of as different as well as a part of the incorporeal Self just as the Qualified Soul in its microcosmic or macrocosmic aspects is spoken of as different as well as a part of the Supreme Self. "From fear of it (Brahman) the wind blows; from fear of It the sun rises, from fear of It Agni and Indra, and Death, the fifth, run"[17]

'Thou art Brahma' and verily thou art Viṣnu.
Thou art Rudra, Thou art Prajāpati.

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15 Tait U 1 4 1
Yaśchandasāmṛṣabho viśvarūpaḥ. chandobhyo'dhyamṛtātsaṁbabhūva Sa mendro medhayā spṛnotu Amṛtasya devā dhārano bhūyāsam Śarīraṁ me vicarṣaṇam. Jihvā me madhumattmā Karnābhyāṁ bhūri viśruvam Brahmaṇaḥ kośo'si medhayā pihitaḥ. Śrutam me gopāya. Āvahantī vitanvānā

16. Bṛh. U. 3.9 2 17. Tai. U. 2.8.1

Thou art Agni, Varuṇa and Vāyu.
Thou art Indra. Thou art the Moon.
Thou art Food. Thou art Yama. Thou art the Earth.
Thou art All. Yea, thou art the unshaken one!
For Nature's sake and for its own
Is existence manifold in thee.
O Lord of all, hail unto thee!
The Soul of all, causing all acts,
Enjoying all, all life art thou!
Lord of all pleasures and delight!
Hail unto thee, O Tranquil Soul (Śāntātmane)
Yea, hail to thee, most hidden one (Guhyatamāya)
Unthinkable Unlimited. (Acintyāyāprameyāya)
Beginningless and endless too (Anādinidhanāya)[18]

In the seventh chapter of the Maitrāyaṇīyopaniṣad the Soul (Ātman) is delineated as the sun and its rays, and it is attempted to show that the various divinities, meters, hymns, chants, seasons, breaths, heavenly bodies, celestial gods and earthly beings are transient emanations in the six different directions returning again into the One Unlimited Soul (Ātman) of the whole world. An analytic and philosophical judgement accompanies Indra's description of Brāhmanic nature.

'Indra, the triṣṭubh meter, the Pañcadasa hymn, the Bṛhad chanda, the summer season, the vyāna breath, the moon, the Rudra gods, issue forth to the south. They shine, they rain, they praise, they enter again within and peer through an opening.

He is without beginning or end, unmeasured, unlimited, not to be moved by another, independent, devoid of marks, formless, of endless power, the creator and the enlightener.'[19]

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18. Mai U. 5.1
Atha Yatheyaṁ Kautsāyanī stutiḥ tvaṁ Brhmā tvaṁ ca Viṣṇu vai tvaṁ Rudrastvaṁ Prajāpatiḥ. Tvaṁagnirvaruṇo Vāyustvaṁ Indrastvaṁ Niśākaraḥ Tvamannastvaṁ Yamastvaṁ pṛthivī tvaṁ visvaṁ tvaṁ athācyutaḥ, svārthe svābhāvike'rthe ca bahudhā saṁsthititstvayi. Viśveśvara namastubhyaṁ Viśvātmā Viśvakarmakṛt Viśvabhugvisvamāyustvaṁ Viśvakrīḍāratiprabhuḥ Namaḥ Śāntātmane tubhyaṁ namo guhyatamāya ca. Acintyāyāprameyāya anādinidhanāya ca.
19. Mai. U. 7.2

Avidyā or Māyā has two aspects;—one is its nature to conceal the Reality and the other is to project non-reality. Indra, the Reality is concealed by Avidyā that creates a world of pairs of opposites and so are created the gods and the demons. This truth is allegorically described in the Upaniṣad 'Verily, Bṛahaspati (the teacher of the gods) became Śukra (the teacher of the Asuras), and for the security of Indra created this Ignorance (Avidyā) for the destruction of the Asuras'[20] Since the bodily existence is an illusion and therefore illusion it is to conceive of the Asuras who are so called because they adhere to the bodily existence. So it is said that on account of Avidyā alone Śiva is known as Aśiva, and Aśiva as Śiva[21] In reality there is One that exists. There is only one Indra and he ie perceived as manifold on account of this Māyā or Avidyā.

The word Indrajāla, occurring in the Upaniṣads and in later literature, meaning jugglery, reflects upon the same philosophical truth as its origin. This world is only an instance of the jugglery of Indra, who is not a creator in reality. We associate him with the world as its creator, sustainer and destroyer, and with the body as the soul therein but in reality he is beyond everything.

The Kenopaniṣad[22] presents an allegory to the same effect that these two world-grounds Brahman and Ātman, are essentially of One nature and two aspects of the same great Being Once Brahman won a victory for gods Though the victory was due to Brahman, the gods became elated by it, and thought, 'Verily, this victory has been won by us. The glory of it is ours.' Brahman knew their vanity, and he appeared before them, but they did not understand who that adorable Spirit was. They deputed Agni, the god of fire to ascertain its identity He venturing of his power to burn, was challanged

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20. Mai U 7.9
Bṛhaspatirvai śukro bhūtvendrasyābhayāyāsurebhyaḥ kṣayāyemāmavidyāmasṛjat
21. Ibid , 7 9
Tyā (avidyayā) śivamaśivamityuddiśantyaśivam Śivamiti.
22. Kenopaniṣad, 3-4

to burn a straw, but was baffled. Upon his returning back, Vāyu, the god of wind, was sent on the same mission. He said to the Adorable Spirit that he could blow all that was on the earth but he could not blow a straw away and was likewise baffled. Then the gods said to Indra, 'Maghavan, find out who this adorable spirit is?' He hastened towards the spirit, but the spirit disappeared from his view. And at that very spot he beheld a woman wonderously fair—the daughter of the snowy Mountain Himavat. And of Her he asked, 'who could this adorable Spirit be ?' 'Brahman,' she exclaimed. 'Indeed through Brahman's victory have you attained greatness.' Then alone he understood that the Spirit was Brahman.

This story can be explained in ādhidaivika (macrocosmic) as well as ādhyātmika (microcosmic) ways. The whole of our bodily existence (including the mind and the senses) is controlled by the gods like Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, Agni and Vāyu whose powers work in the cosmic activity. Then again desires and all their evil working is known as Asuras and the pure activities of the senses and instincts of the mind are thought to be the Devas The conflict between the Gods and the Asuras termed as Devāsura war is going on inside the individual body as well as outside of it in Nature It is said that as it is in the microcosm so is in the macrocosm (Yathā piṇḍe tathā brahmāṇḍe) The psychological and the cosmic victories which these Devas win in the microcosm and the macrocosm respectively over the Asuras are not due to their own inherent power. It is indeed the Ātman, that wins victory for them. The monarch who leads the whole host of devas dwelling in the microcosm and macrocosm is none but Indra, the Jivātman or the Individual Self as well as the Paramātman or the Universal Self. Indra is another name for the Supreme Self also. Agni is the *cit* or intelligence within and the God of fire outside. Vāyu is Prāṇa or mind within the body and cosmic air in the cosmos These two gods are very powerful but before Yakṣa, the adorable Spirit, they are powerless. Then proceeds Indra to know It; but it vanishes from his presence. This disappearance of Yakṣa before Indra unfolds the deeper and inner meaning of this allegory. Within the domain of speech and mind the objects of vision possess a distinctive

form among the relative perceptions of duality. But as soon as 'pure I' or the ego devoid of its branching off personality is intuitively fixed upon, the preceding object of perception vanishes away; the duality is no more perceived and there dawns on horizon Umā Haimavatī—the absolute pure knowledge, the Vidyā and through her Indra realizes the Brahman within himself as its his essence.

What higher concept of the deity than the one set forth in this story, could be expected In the later Upaniṣads as well Indra has an important position. The spirit of the Vedic diction is incorporated in the delineation of Indra in these Upaniṣads which are late in origin Indra is called upon to remove fear. He is described as accompanied with Maruts, destroyer of Vṛtra, mighty and knowing god. He is called Maghavan, Śakra and drinker of Soma. He is designated the lord of subjects He holds Vajra in his hand. He is called Ṣoḍaśī, having sixteen aspects.

In the Nṛsiṁhapūrvatāpanīyopanisad it is said that the Highest, Self-illumined and Imperishable Puruṣa is Brahman,[23] is Śiva, Indra and Agni. Such descriptions of Indra are contained in Nirālambopaniṣad (5 20), Kaivalyopaniṣad (1.8), Avyaktopaniṣad (5 6), Atharvaśiropaniṣad (2 5) and other minor Upaniṣads

So Indra in the Upaniṣads is conceived of as an embodiment of pure unity of the real Self in which all subjectivity and objectivity are immersed

VARUNA IN THE UPANIṢADS

The concept of the Ātman outshines all other concepts in the Upaniṣads In fact epistemological idealism regarding the conception of pure unity stands for the absolute denial of duality And, therefore, all the deities of Vedic pantheon are obsohrved into the Absolute One. The Upanisads present metaphysics which is purely idealistic.

'In the state of sleep going aloft and alow,
A god, he makes many forms for himself.'[24]

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23 Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad 20 2-5.11
24. Bṛ U 4.3 13

In reality there is no universe. How could there be a creator, a sustainer or a destroyer. No kingdom is there to be ordained, then how could there be a law or the ordainer of law

The principle of illusion however furnishes, so to say, a scope for the realistic conception of the ultimate unity. Keeping a complete philosophical harmony with the idealistic truth and, as such, that one all-encompassing Monistic Being is described as possessed of as many qualities as there are in the whole of the real world that it constitutes. But this is not the noumenal Brahman but the phenomenal Brahman whose attributes are all other gods. So in the Upaniṣads Varuna is identified with the Supreme Brahman in the idealistic conception of unity and stands as the attribute of the Phenomenal Brahma in the realistic conception of unity Along with this the myths associated with the deity in the Brāhmaṇas are used to illustrate the fundamental Reality of the Upaiṣads

The immediacy and directness of the Brahman by a reference to the contraction and expansion of different gods who are ruled by It are attempted to be conveyed in the Śākalya section of the Bṛhadāranyakopaniṣad There Varuṇa is described as follows ·

Śākalya says, "Verily, he who knows that Person whose abode is water, whose world is the heart, whose light is mind, who is the ultimate resort of every soul—he, verily would be a knower, O Yājñavalkya" "Verily I know that Person, the last resort of every soul, of whom you speak. This very person who is in the waters is He. Tell me, Śākalya, who is his god ?"[25]

"Varuṇa," said he (Śākalya).

In this section other gods associated with different objects

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25. Br. U 3 9.16
Āpa eva yasyāyatanam, hṛdayam lokaḥ, mano jyotiḥ, yo vai taṁ puruṣaṁ vidyātsarvasyātmanaḥ parāyaṇam, savai veditā syādyājñavalkya. Vedavāhaṁ taṁ puruṣaṁ sarvasyātmanaḥ parāyaṇaṁ yamātthaḥ ya evayamapsu puruṣaḥ sa eṣaḥ, vadaiva śākalya, tasya kā devateti, Varuṇa iti hovāca.

and powers are also described. Then follows a discussion about the quarters with their deities and there Varuṇa is associated with the western direction and supposed to be seated in waters.

Śākalya asked Yājñavalkya, "What divinity have you in this western quarter ?"

'Varuṇa '

'That Varuna—on what is he based?'

'On water.'

'And on what is water based?'

'On semen.'

'And on what is semen based?'

'On the heart '[26]

Thus, the cosmological association of Varuṇa with the waters is well recognised in the Upaniṣads also and the origin of these waters is traced to the heart which signifies the desire of the Supreme to create.

The Upaniṣad has to further scrutinize the notion of five directions in space, their regent gods and their bases and the next question is :

'On what is the heart based?' (asks Śākalya)

'You idiot', said Yājñavalkya, 'that you will think that it could be anywhere else than in ourselves'. And the questions follow and the answers are given. The Prāna (the breath) is the basis for the self (body), the Apāna is the basis for Prāṇa The Vyāna (diffused breath) is the basis for Apāna. Udāna (up-breath) is the basis for Vyāna, and Samāna is the basis for Udāna. But that which is the ultimate Basis, the Ātman, that is Neti Neti—not this, not this. It is imperceptible, for It is never perceived; undecaying, for It never decays; unattached, for It is never attached; unfettered—It never feels pain and never suffers injury 'These are the eight abodes, the eight instruments of vision, the eight deities and the eight

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26 Br U 3 9 22
Kiṁ devato'syāṁ pratīcyaṁ diśyasīti Varuṇadevata iti, sa Varuṇaḥ kasmin pratiṣṭhita iti Apasvati. kasmin navāpaḥ pratiṣṭhitā iti. retasīti, kasminnu retaḥ pratiṣṭhitamiti, hṛdaye iti.

beings. I ask you of that being who is to be known only from the Upaniṣads, who definitely projects those beings and (again) withdraws them into Himself, and who is at the same time transcendent.[27]

Thus we find that all speculation about the individual gods is secondary to that of the Supreme Soul.

In the Chāndogyopaniṣad Varuna is addressed with a prayer to bestow food.

'Om Let us eat. Om. Let us drink. Om. Let the Sun, the luminous deity, Varuṇa and Prajapati bring food here.[28]

"A dull note belongs to Varuṇa,"[29] says the Chāndogyopaniṣad while discussing the different notes employed in the chanting of the Sāman. This dull note is not to be cultivated. All other notes can be sung.

In the following passage Mitra and Varuṇa along with meters, hymns, chants, seasons, breath and celestial gods are described, but are only transient percolations going back again to the Absolute Soul

Mitra and Varuna, the Pankti meter, the Triṇava and Trayastriṁśa hymns, the Śākvara and Raivata chants, the winter and the dewy seasons, the Udāna breath, the Angirasa, the moon, issue forth above. They shine, they rain, they praise, they enter again within and peer through an opening.

' . Him who is called Om, a leader, brilliant, sleepless, ageless, deathless, sorrowless.[30]

The immanent Soul is addressed as Varuṇa. 'You are Agni, Varuṇa and Vāyu. ... but this manifold existence is for Nature's sake and its sake. ....'[31]

The honey-doctrine of the Chāndogyopaniṣad prescribes meditation on the Ādityas after meditating on the Vasus and the Rudras It states that on the third of these nectars of the Ādityas live, with Varuṇa at their head Truly the gods do not eat or drink They are satisfied by merely looking at the

27. Br U. 3 9.25-26
28. Ch U. 1 12 5
29 Ibid , 2.22.1 Apadhvāntam vāruṇasya.
30. Mai. U. 7.4
31. Ibid., 5 1

nectar. They retire into that (dark) colour and rise up from that colour. He who thus knows this nectar becomes one of the Ādityas, with Varuṇa at their head; he is satisfied by merely looking at the nectar. He returns into that (dark) colour and again rises up from that colour. As long as the sun rises in the south and sets in the north, twice as long does it rise in the west and sets in the east, and just so long does he, like the Ādityas, enjoy rulership and sovereignty. The period of enjoyment of the Ādityas and of the knower of the third nectar is double that of the Rudras.[32]

The reference here is to the four worlds on the four sides of the Mānasa Lake, which is on the top of Mount Meru For all these regions Meru is on the North. The sun moves around the top These worlds are called the regions of Indra, Yama, Varuna and Soma As a result of meditation the spiritual aspirants go to these worlds for enjoyment but the ultimate aim set forth is the attainment of Brahmaloka through the doctrine of honey.

The legend of Varuna as a teacher and father to Bhṛgu has been given in the Brāhmanas and its significance has been shown in the section relating to Varuna in the Brāhmanas The Chāndogyopaniṣad has a referenee to that legend in as much as it names the teacher as Varuṇa and the disciple as Bhṛgu, otherwise, the contents of the two episodes have no relation whatsoever In the Upanisadic legend Bhṛgu, the son of Varuna, approached his father Varuṇa with a request to teach him about Brāhman, and Varuṇa taught him that the Being from which food, the vital air, the eye, the ear, the mind, speech are born, that by which, when born, they live, that into which (at the time of dissolution) they enter, and merge is Brahman, whose knowledge should be sought.[33] Anyway, Varuna is rightly portrayed as the teller of the Highest Truth in this story.

In the later Upaniṣads also Varuṇa is of course enumerated along with other gods and is identified with the Supreme but his Vedic characteristics are also revived.[34]

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32. Ch U 3 8

33 Tait U 2 1.1

34. Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad, 5 11 12

Mahānārāyanopaniṣad calls Varuṇa as the remover of the sin and also speaks of his noose[35] Varuna along with other deities is prayed to remove whatever wrong is done with mind, speech and action[36] And such prayers addressed to Varuṇa are very frequently found in the later Upaniṣads.

35. Ibid., 20 12
Varṇasyaskam...Unmukto Varuṇasya pāśaḥ
36. Mahānārāyaṇopaniṣad, 4 12

5

INDRA & VARUNA IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

During the Mahābhārata and the Paurāṇika times, or in the works of the later mythology, the Hindu Triad (the trinity) i e Brahmā, Viṣnu and Śiva gain importance over the various gods of the Vedic pantheon The triad that is Brahmā, Viṣnu and Śiva represent forces of creation, preservation and destruction respectively The concept of the Trinity, however, does not overshadow the principle of the One Supreme Being as found in the Samhitās and the Upaniṣads and affirmed countless times in the Mahābhārata which states that the three exist in one and the one in three in the same way as the Veda is divided into three (Trāvī) and yet it is one These three i e Brahmā, Visnu and Śiva are comprehended within that one being who is Supreme and the soul of all animate and inanimate creation The account of gods as thirthythree, three hundred and thirtythree and three thousand three hundred and thirtythree given in the Saṁhitās, the Brāhmanas and the Upaniṣads is also retained in the Mahābhārata It says that the generation of Devas, as a brief example was thirtythree thousand, thirtythree hundred and thirtythree [1] Commenting on the Mahābhārata 1 1 41-42, Nīlakanṭha says that the thirty-three gods are enumerated as three hundred or thirty thousand on account of the glory of the one [2] Thus in the Mahābhārata thirty-three crore gods are delineated Moreover it is said

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1 Mahābhārata, Ādi 1 41
Trayastriṁsatsahasrāṇi trayastriṁśacchatāni ca,
Traaastriṁsacca devānāṁ sṛṣṭiḥ saṁkṣepalakṣaṇā

2 Ibid , 66 37
Ete devāstrayastriṁśatsarvabhūtagaṇeśvarāḥ, ityuktestrayastriṁśa-devadevah tāvaṁti satāni sahasrāṇi vā teṣāmeva vibhūtirityarthaḥ
katama ekādevateti prāṇa iti sa brahmetyupasaṁhare tatraivo-ktamekaṁ sutrātmānaṁ cetanaṁ vivakṣitatvāttadvibhutayonye cetanā ityāha

that the devotees propitiate the different gods according to their mental disposition but in reality they worship the same Supreme Being. Bhagvān says in the Bhīṣmaparva that the light which resides in the sun, in the moon, in the fire and illumines the whole world—know that light to be mine.[3] I am centred in the hearts of all ; memory and perception as well as their loss come from Me. I am verily that which has to be known by all the Vedas, I indeed am the author of the Vedānta, and the knower of the Veda am I [4] The Mahābhārata beautifully sums up this fundamental question saying that there are two Puruṣas in the world—the Perishable and the Imperishable. All beings are the Perishable and the Kutastha is called Imperishable. But there is another, the Supreme Puruṣa, called the Highest Self, —He who, the immutable Lord, pervading the three worlds, sustains them As I transcend the Perishable and am above even the Imperishable, therefore am I in the world and in the Veda celebrated *as the Puruṣottama, the Highest Purusa* [5] The two categories of Puruṣas represent the 'upādhis' of the Puruṣa. The Kūṭastha Puruṣa manifests Itself in various forms of illusion and deception and is known as Imperishable because it is the seed of the endless world. The eternal spirit is devoid of any kind of change and mobility. It is the immutable principle in the mutable. These two principles are not irreconcilable opposites, because the same spirit is manifested as many Nīlakantha remarks on this that from cosmic end, the Supreme is Īśvara, the highest person, Puruṣottama, the Lord of the universe who dwells in the cavity of everybeing's heart [6] But the Supreme Person is above and

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3. Bhīṣma, 39.12
   Yadādityagataṁ tejo jagadbhāsayate'khilam,
   Yaccandramasi yaccāgnou tattejo vidhhi māmakam.
4. Ibid., 39 15
   Sarvasya cāhaṁ hṛdi sanniviṣṭo mataḥ smṛtijñanamapohanañ ca.
   Vedaiśca sarvairahameva vedyo vedantakṛdvedavideva cāham.
5 Ibid., 29 16-18
6. Avyayaḥ sarvajñatvena īśvaradharmeṇa alpajñatvena jīvadharmeṇa vā, na vyeti vardhate kṣīyate vetyarthaḥ. Nīlakaṇṭha.

beyond the perishable and the Imperishable.[7] It is only when manifested It is known by different names and this explains the multiplicity of gods. Says the Mahābhārata through Śrikṛṣṇa, 'Of the Ādityas I am Visnu; of luminaries, the radiant Sun; of the winds, I am Marīci; of the asterisms, the Moon I am the Sāmaveda of the Vedas, Indra of the gods, and of the senses I am Mind, and intelligence in beings am I. And of the Rudras I am Śankara, of the Yakṣas and Rāksasas the Lord of wealth; of the Vasus I am Pāvaka; and of mountains, Meru am I And of snakes Ananta I am; I am Varuna of the water-beings; and Aryamā of Pitṛs I am, I am Yama of controllers[8] And further whatsoever is the seed of all existences that am I; nor is there anything moving or unmoving that can exist without me There is no end to my divine manifestations What has been declared by me is only illustrative of my infinite glory. Whatever being there is endowed with glory, grace and vigour, know that to have sprung from a fragrant of my splendour[9] S Radhakrishnan has attempted to show the akinness of the manifestations or Vibhūtis', representing the formative forces to Plato's Divine Ideas, but he remarks that 'only the word "Idea" is likely to suggest a pale abstraction, a bloodless category Vibhūti is a living formative principle '[10] These vibhūtis or the manifestations of the Supreme are cosmically represented as gods who are indeed countless and limitless according to the Mahābhārata In other words the eternal creative or formative principles manifest in this world, that is a constant creative process are the gods, the divine concepts and the concept of their totality or entirety is the concept of the Supreme—the source of everything and all. The nature of the Supreme alone is expressed in various gods

Mythology is thus mainly related with the creation which has three aspects, i.e. inception, sustenance and destruction

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7. Muṇḍakopaniṣad, 2 1.1 2
   Akṣarāt parataḥ para puruṣaḥ
8. Bhiṣma, 35 21-23, 29
9. Ibid., 35 39-41
10. S. Radhakrishnan Tne Bhagvadgītā, p 261

and hence the development of the concept of Trinity In the Mahābhārata the Supreme is spoken of as Brahmā, Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu and Śiva. Viṣṇu is delineated as the lord of all and all-pervading. Śiva is also spoken of as all-pervading Supreme Entity. But strangely enough we find that though Kṛṣna etc. are raised to the status of the Supreme Being, still they call for each other's assistance and propitiate each other. In the Vanaparva 20.12, Kṛṣṇa is described worshipping Śiva Whatever might be the case, it is very clear that Brahmā, Kṛṣna or Viṣṇu and Śiva were worshipped as the Supreme Entities at the time of Mahābhārata, and a comparative and critical observation of the text shows while the worship of Brahmā ceased, Viṣnu and Śiva gained ground and received more and more unbounded adoration. The other gods like Agni, Indra, Varuṇa, Sūrya etc , though retained their sublime attributes yet became less important with reference to the Trinity. To prove for instance, the Supremacy of Viṣṇu—Indra the all-powerful Supreme god of the Veda is delineated as a powerless entity who being frightened of Vṛtra went to Nārāyana for help Nārāyana restored Indra with his lustre and then Indra b came victorious [11] Similarly Varuna, the majestic god of the Ṛgveda becomes a night-god and finally only a god of lakes and pools.

Thus it is noticed that Indra and Varuṇa have fallen into the second rank as they reach the epic period, though the mythical details have grown in volume and their delineation is no more marked by suppressed personification In the Mahābhārata we find endless stories related with various gods. Their form, dominions, powers, vehicles, relation with worshippers and all other matters are fully detailed in this encyclopaedic epic.

INDRA IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

In the Mahābhārata, Indra is known by many names such as Śakra, Maghavan, Ṛbhukṣa, Vāsava, Arha and Purandara. His epithets or titles are also numerous. He is

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11. Udyoga 101. 9-11.9

Vṛtra-han, 'the destroyer of Vṛtra', Vajrapāṇi, 'holder of thunderbolt in his hand', Megha-vāhana, 'borne upon the clouds; Pākaśāsana, 'the subduer of Pāka (a demon); Śatakratu, 'of a hundred sacrifices', Devapati and Svargapati, 'Lord of heaven', Jiṣṇu, 'leader of celestial host', Marutvān, 'Lord of the winds'. Ugradhanvan, Lord of the terrible bows'; Vajrabhṛta, 'the holder of Vajra' and many others

Indra is the king of svarga.[12] The city of Indra is Amarāvatī, which is beautifully described in the Mahābhārata.[13] Amarāvatī is adorned with jewels and trees yielding any sort of fruit, that is desired There the sun does not shed heat; nor do heat or cold or fatigue torment any one. In Amarāvatī, the celestials feel neither sorrow nor depression, nor weakness nor lassitude, they have neither anger, nor covetousness. In that abode of the celestials, the beings are ever contented and the trees always bear verdent foliage, fruits, and flowers. The various lakes are furnished with the fragrance of lotuses There the breeze is cool, delicious, fragrant, pure and inspiring. The ground is variegated with all kinds of gems, and adorned with blossoms. There are innumerable beautiful beasts and in the air innumerable rangers of the sky In that city of Indra live Vasus, Rudras Śadhyas, Maruts, Ādityas and the Aśvins The city is adorned with Gandharvas and the celestials.

Indra's palace-hall, court and attandants are described at length in the Mahābhārata. In the Sabhāparva is given the description of the courts of Yama, Varuṇa, Indra, Śiva and Brahmā [14] The celestial assembly room of Indra is described as full of lustre, which Indra has obtained as a result of his own acts Possessed of the splendour of the sun, it was built by Śakra himself. The celestial assembly hall of Indra is full one hundred and fifty yojanas in length and hundred yojanas in breadth and five yojanas in height and it is

12 Śānti 227 119
Praśāntacetā muditaḥ svamālayaṁ triviṣṭapaṁ prāpya mumoda Vāsavah

13 Vana 168 45-53

14 Sabhā 6-11

mobile. It is devoid of weakness of age, grief, fatigue and fear and is auspicious and bestowed with good fortune. It is furnished with rooms, seats and adorned with celestial trees and is delightful to the extreme In such an assembly hall Indra, the Lord of gods with his wife Śacī embodied with beauty and affluence sits on an excellent seat. Assuming a form incapable of description for its obscurity, with a crown on his head and bright bracelets on the upper arms, attired in robes of pure white and decked with floral wreaths of many hues, Indra sits in that assembly hall, with beauty fame and glory on his side and is waited upon by all other gods, Ṛṣis and ascetics. The pure souled, sinless, resplendent and energetic celestial seers all wait upon Indra.[16]

One full chapter of the Sabhā parva is devoted to describe the assembly hall of Indra All the other gods Agni, Soma, Mitra, Savitṛ, Aryaman, Bhaga, Bṛhaspati, Śukra, Viśvavasu and Citrasena, Sumanas and Taruṇa are all present in that assembly The sacrifices, the gifts to Brāhmaṇas, the planets, the stars and the mantras that are uttered all abide in the Indrasabhā Not only that, many heavenly nymphs and gandharvas present various kinds of dances and musical performances, both instrumental and vocal, to gratify Śatkratu This assembly house of Indra is named as Puṣkaramālinī.[17]

In the Brāhmana literature Indra is assigned the southern direction, but in the Mahābhārata he is the regent of the eastern quarter.

The palace of Indra is named Vaijayanta and his garden is called Nandana, Kundasāra or Paruṣya. The elephant of Indra is Airāvata of huge body and with two pairs of white tusks and the name of his horse is Uccaiśravas, the gem of steeds, who arose at the churning of the ocean for nectar, and is described as the divine, graceful, perpetually young, creation's masterpiece, i.e. of irresistible vigour, and blessed with every auspicious mark.[18] His chariot is called Vimāna in the Mahābhārata and the name of the charioteer is Mātali.

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15. Sabhā. 87 1-9
16. Ibid., 7, 21-25
17. Sabhā. 7.30
18. Ādi. 27

Indra is supposed to be residing at Mountain Mandara, that covers the earth upto the ocean.[19] Indra, the Lord of the gods stands as a model king to the kings of the earth. In the Vana Parva, Dhanada, discoursing on the principles of administration says that a kṣatriya possessed with patience, understanding of propriety regarding place and time and all moral regulations can alone govern the world for a long time. Just as Śakra having displayed his powers at the proper place and time has obtained the dominion of heaven along with the Vasus.[20]

Indra, though inferior to the mythical triad of the Epic triad is the chief of all the other gods and is the giver of strength, power, children and happiness to all creatures when propitiated he fulfils every body's wishes. Indra destroys the wicked and protects the righteous He assigns to all creatures their various duties. He officiates for the sun and moon where there is no sun and moon Indra even acts for Agni, Vāyu, Pṛthivī and Āpah when occasion requires it. The capacities of Indra are immens[21] Indra endowed with limitless strength, enterprising force, valour and unending lustre is the chief among gods and is their ruler [22]

In Kadrū's prayer to Śakra for rain, he is identified with all other gods Kadrū propitiated Indra, saying

"I bow to thee, thou Lord of all the deities !
I bow to thee, thou slayer of Vṛtra !
I bow to thee, thou slayer of Namuci !
O thou of a thousand eyes, consort of Śacī !
by thy showers, be thou the protector of the snakes (mythical development of saving or rescuing clouds, Ahi meaning snake also) scorched by the sun !
O thou best of the deities, thou art our great protector.
O Purandara, thou art able to grant rain in torrents !

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19 Vana 163, 4 5
20 Ibid, 160, 3-5
21. Ibid, 229 9-11
22 Indro hi rāja devānaṁ pradhāna iti naḥ śrutam,
Aprameyabolot sāho vīryavānamitadyutiḥ.

Thou art Vāyu (the air), the clouds, Agni and Vidyuta in the sky.
Thou art the propeller of the clouds, and has been called the great cloud (i.e. that which will darken the universe at the end of yuga) !
Thou art the fierce and incomparable thunder and the roaring cloud.
Thou art the creator of the worlds and their destroyer!
Thou art unconquered.
Thou art the light of all creatures, Āditya Vibhāvasu, and the wonderful elements.
Thou art the ruler of all the deities.
Thou art Viṣṇu
Thou hast a thousand eyes.
Thou art a god and the final source !
Thou art, O deity, all amṛta, (Immortality) and the most adored Soma[23] (Nīlakaṇṭha says that Soma denotes Īśvara)[24]
Thou art the moment, the lunar day, minute, (the lava),
Thou art the (moment) ksana
Thou art the lighted fortnight, and also the dark fortnight.
Thou art kāla, thou kāṣṭhā and thou truṭi (divisions of time).
Thou art the year, the seasons, the months, the nights and the day !
Thou art also the firmament resplendent with the sun.
Thou art the great ocean with heaving billows and abounding with whales, swallower of whales, and makaras and various fishes.
Thou art adored by the wise and by the great Ṛṣis with minds rapt in contemplation.
Thou drinkest, for the good of all creatures, the Soma juice in sacrifices and the clarified butter offered with sacred invocation

23. Ādi. 25. 7-13
24. Nīlakaṇṭha
Soma Īśvaraḥ. Parmaiḥ śreṣṭhairarcitaḥ Somaḥ pavate janitā matīnāṁ janitā divo janitā pṛthivyāḥ. Janitāgnerjanita sūryasya janitendrasya janitotaviṣṇoḥ'iti śrutiḥ prasiddhiḥ.

Thou art always worshipped at sacrifices by Brāhmaṇas, moved by desire of fruit O Thou of incomparable strength, thou art sung in the Vedas and Vedāngas.[25]

This delineation of Indra in the Mahābhārata matches with the Vedic descriptions of Indra Indra is conceived as the highest entity who encompasses all other forces and is the object of all adoration Though he is being adored for the sake of rain, he is indeed said to be the force behind all activity. He is the Supreme.[26]

Indra is the fourth of the twelve Ādityas according to Sambhava parva of the Ādiparva and in the same chapter it is stated that he is the seventh of the twelve Ādityas[27] In the Śāntiparva he is described as the eleventh of the Ādityas who are supposed to be the sons of Kaśyapa[28] These gods are considered to be ruling over the three worlds and Viṣṇu's supremacy over all other gods is shown here and this is a very significant aspect of the religious thought of the Mahābhārata Though Brahmā and Śiva are equally important still on account of Kṛṣṇa's being the most important character in the story of the Mahābhārata and an incarnation of Viṣṇu, Viṣṇu is on the whole shown as the most adorable god but on account of the essential identity of the concepts of god-head Indra is also praised as the highest entity as well as is shown to be lower than Nārāyana, Śiva or Brahmā whose favours are enjoyed by him. In the Udyogaparva Indra is described as propitiating Nara and Nārāyaṇa who assist him in slaying the Daityas and the Dānavas [29]

Indra is spoken of as Viṣṇu's manifestation in the Śāntiparva which says when the Dānavas had multiplied and swept away all barriers and distinctions the powerful Māndhātā became king and performed a great sacrifice with the desire of be-

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25 Ādi 25 14-17

26 Nīlakantha on M. Ādi 25
Atrāpīndropādhikaṁ brahma stūyate namaste ityādinā Lokasraṣṭṛtvasaṁhartṛtvādestalliṅgadarsanāt

27 Adi. 123 67

28. Śānti. 208-15-16

29 Udyog 49.9 11-13

holding Nārāyaṇa The supreme Lord Viṣṇu assumed the form of Indra and showed himself unto Māndhātā who accompanied by many other kings offered his obeisence to Indra.[30] An absolute identity of Indra and Viṣṇu is intended here.[31] Then a significant dialogue took place between Māndhātā and Indra which explains the way the Kṣatriya duties are attributed to the gods Viṣṇu, when he slays the Asuras, is performing the Ksatriya duties and the Mahābhārata refers to an ancient episode when Visnu, by acting according to Ksatriya duties, forcibly suppressed and destroyed his foes and thereby afforded relief to the gods and the Ṛṣis If the divine Viṣṇu of inconceivable energy had not slain all his foes among the Asuras, then the Brāhmanas, Brahmā, the Creator of the worlds the Ksatriya duties, and all other sustaining principles would have all been destroyed[32] In the Indian mythology the slaying of Asuras, Daityas and Dānavas is mainly associated with Indra and the Saṁhitā speaks of Viṣṇu's assistance to Indra in this great work However the Indian concept of the deity is so conscious of the unity among the diverse gods that the epithets and functions of one deity are transferred to another without the least hesitation.

Again in the Nārāyanāstramokṣa parva of the Drona parva, the supremacy of Śiva over Indra is set forth. There occurs an account that formerly the valiant Asuras had in heaven three excellent and extensive cities. One was made of iron, another of silver and the third of gold. The golden city belonged to Kamalākṣa, the silver city to Tārakṣa, and the third made of iron, had Vidyumālin for its lord With all his weapons, Indra was unable to make any impression on those cities Afflicated by the Asuras, all the gods along with Vāsava sought the protection of Rudra and requested him to slay the enemies of the gods. He accepted their request and pierced the three cities with his terrible shaft consisting of three knots.[33]

The superiority of Śiva over Indra is stressed further by

30 Śānti. 64-65
31. Śānti. 64 14-15
32. Ibid., 64. 23-24
33. Droṇa. 202.66

the details that follow. While the three cities commenced to burn, the goddess Pārvatī went there to behold the sight. She had then on her lap a child having a bald head with five clumps of hair on it. The goddess asked the deities as to who that child was? Śakra, through ill-feeling endeavoured to strike that child with his thunderbolt. The divine lord Mahādeva (for the child was none other), smiling quickly paralysed the arm of the enraged Śakra Then god Śakra with his arm paralysed accompanied by all the celestials, speedily repaired to Brahmā and told him that some wonderful creature lying on the lap of Pārvatī, in the form of a child, was beheld by them but not saluted and that they all had been vanquished by him Then Brahmā told the gods headed by Indra, that the child was the divine Hara, the lord of the entire mobile and immobile universe. Then all the gods along with Brahmā and with Indra as their chief adored Śiva who became gratified with the gods and thereupon the arm of the thunder-wielding Śakra regained its natural state,[34] and then follows an adoration of Śiva where he is identified with allother gods and that adoration is a prototype of the adoration of Indra by Kadrū It says, 'he is Rudra, he is Śiva, he is Agni, he is Indra, he is Vāyu, he is 'the twin Aświns and he is the lightning,[35] and so on, the spirit of the epic throbs in the same prayer, 'He is one, he is many, he is hundred and thousand '[36] Thus all these gods are personalities of the One universal Deva The names of the deities thus became the epithets of the Supreme Entity, symbolising and expressing the various aspects and manifestations of the Supreme, who is not different from its manifestations

In the Mahābhārata are described the episodes relating to the slaying of Daityas, Rākṣasas and Asuras The myth of Indra-Vṛtra battle has developed in its details and Vṛtra is described as a Brāhmaṇa, whose killer would suffer for the sin of Brahmacide At the same time it must be remembered that the Indra of the epic is not all powerful and goes to Brahmā,

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34. Droṇa 202. 84-85, 100
35. Droṇa 202.102
36. Ibid , 202 106.

Viṣṇu and Śiva for assistance. Detailed descriptions, however, are given of this mythical battle [37]

The Mahābhārata like the Brāhmaṇa literature, further states that although the prince of Daityas was slain, yet Śakra in panic ran from the field, desiring to take shelter in a lake. thinking that Vajra itself had not been hurled from his hands and that Vṛtra himself was still alive. The gods and the great Ṛṣis however became filled with joy, and all of them began cheerfully to chant the praise of Indra.

The Udyogaparva[38] gives a very interesting account of the battle beteen Indra and Vṛtra. Vṛtra departed towards the celestial regions as he was directed by Tvaṣṭa, his creator to kill Indra. Then ensued a great fight between Vṛtra and Indra, both fired with wrath And the heroic Vṛtra seized the celestial lord Indra and whirled him Vṛtra threw Indra into his mouth and swallowed him up At this the gods became apprehensive and created Jṛmbhika to kill Vṛtra and as the latter yawned and his mouth opened Indra contracted the different parts of his body and came out from within Vṛtra's mouth At this the gods rejoiced but once again commenced the terrible fight between Vṛtra and Indra This fight continued for a long time And when Vṛtra, inspired with the mighty spirit of Tvaṣṭā and himself possessed of fire got the upper hand in fight, Indra retreated at which the gods became exceedingly distressed and repaired to the mighty god Visṇu for their protection Viṣṇu however advised the gods to go to Vṛtra and adopt a conciliatory policy towards him by which they would be able to overthrow him How the all-powerful Indra of the Vedas has degraded in the Mahābhārata is clear from the following statement of Viṣṇu, 'by virtue of my power, victory, gods will be won by Indra For remaining invisible, I shall enter into his thunderbolt O foremost of all gods, depart with the Ṛṣis and the Gandharvas. Let there be no delay in effecting a peace between Indra and Vṛtra."[39]

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37. Vana 100 101; Udyoga 10; Śānti 122.27
38 Udyoga 9 10
39. Ibid., 10.12-13

The sages and the gods led by Indra approached Vṛtra. The sages spoke to Vṛtra in conciliatory terms saying—'O thou unconquerable being, the whole of the universe has been pervaded by your energy, you are not able, however, to overpower Indra. A long period has now elapsed since you began to fight Let there be eternal friendship between you and Indra You shall be happy and dwell eternally in Indra's regions' Being requested again and again by the sages Vṛtra agreed to have friendship with Indra on the condition that Indra and the other gods might not kill him by what was dry or wet, by stone or by wood ; by a weapon fit for a close fight, or by a missile, in the day time, or at night Thus peace between Vṛtra and Indra was concluded and Vṛtra became very much pleased Indra also was happy though constantly occupied with the thought of killing Vrtra and he passed his time in search of a loophole And on a certain day when it was evening and the hour awful, Indra caught sight of Vṛtra on the coast of the sea and having in the mind the boon that was granted to him thought that if he did not kill him at that time which was neither day, nor night, it would not go well with him. Contemplating on Viṣṇu he beheld at that instant in the sea a mass of froth as large as a hill That was neither dry, or wet, nor was it a weapon, so he threw at Vṛtra that mass of froth blended with the thunderbolt And Visnu having entered that froth killed Vṛtra. When Vṛtra was killed, there blew a pleasant breeze All beings were filled with joy The gods with the Gandharvas, Yakṣas and Rākṣasas glorified the mighty Indra with various laudatory hymns and saluted Indra who spoke words of encouragement to all and being very happy at heart for having killed Vṛtra along with a others propitiated Viṣnu

The details of the birth of Vṛtra, however, given in the Udyogaparva relate another encounter that took place between Indra and Triśiras, the son of Tvastā. Like the episode of Indra Vṛtra fight, this also has its origin in the Veda and likewise has undergone a great change. Vṛtra was created by Tvaṣṭā for the destruction of Indra because the latter had slain Tvastā's son named Triśiras. The broil between Indra

and Triśiras' described in the Mahābhārata[40] is given below in brief Once Tvaṣṭā, the lord of creatures was engaged in auster penances and it is said that from antipathy to Indra he created a son having three heads who hankered after Indra's seat Possessed of those three awful faces resembling the sun, the moon and the fire, he read the Vedas with one mouth, drank wine with another and looked with the third as if he would absorb all the cardinal points. He was intent upon a life of religious practices and austerities which were rigid, terrible and exceedingly severe in character Beholding his austerities, courage and truthfulness Indra became anxious, fearing lest that being should take his place To tempt the three headed son of Tvaṣṭā and disturb his rigid practice of austerities, Indra sent the heavenly nymphs who endeavoured to attract him with various gestures of love But engaged in the practice of exceedingly severe austerities, although he looked at them, yet he was not influenced by desire. Of subdued senses he was like the ocean full to the brim in gravity The nymphs having tried their best came back to Indra and reported him their inability to distract Triśiras. Then Indra who was enraged, hurled at the three-headed being his thunderbolt Forcibly struck by that thunder-bolt, he was slain and fell down But beholding him slain by the thunderbolt and lying down huge as a hill, the chief of the celestials found no peace, and felt as if scorched by the effulgent appearance of the dead ; for though slain, he had a blazing and effulgent appearance and looked like one alive. And strange to say, though lifeless, his heads seemd to be alive as they were beheld lying low on the field Exceedingly afraid of that lustre, Indra remained plunged in thought. At that time bearing an axe on his shoulder, a carpenter came there by chance and Indra immediately requested him to cut off the heads of Triśiras and promised to bestow a favour upon the carpenter that the men in sacrifice would give him the head of the sacrificial beast as his share. Hearing this, the carpenter at the request of Indra immediately severed the

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40. Udyoga. 9

went to heaven. The carpenter also went back to his house. Indra having killed his foe, considered his object gained

Now when the lord of creatures, Tvaṣṭā heard that his son had been slain by Indra, he created Vṛtra for the destruction of Indra

A state of hostility between Indra and Tvaṣṭā is illuded to in the Veda. Triśiras, the son of Tvaṣṭā, is mentioned in the Ṛgveda He is also called Viśvarūpa and was killed by Tṛta Āptya and Indra. This account is furthered in the many details in the Taittirīya Saṁhitā and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa Some of the details of the epic-legend can be traced back to the Kāṭhaka Samhitā which introduces that Indra killed Viśvarūpa thinking that he was going to be become all powerful The account of the carpenter and his help rendered to Indra occurs here for the first time [41] According to some authorities[42] Triśiras was fever personfied as a demon with three stages of heat, cold and sweeting The epic however has fully developed the myth and used it to show that not only the human being suffer but even the gods suffer the pain[43] and that struggle is the law of nature

The same episode is also used to illustrate the high position of the Brāhmanas and that the sin caused by Brahmicide even affects the gods Though it is also true that the moral standard set up for a Brāhmanas was extremely high and rigid The Brāhmanas have always been very important among the four castes The Brāhmanas are all powerful in the Mahābhārata. Mahābhārata claims to contain everything that exists on the earth and it is well known that the Mahābhārata has undergone three stages of development Only at the final stage of develop-

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41 Kāthaka Saṁhitā, 12 10
Sa Indro'manyata 'ayam vāva idaṁ bhaviṣyati '
sa Takṣāṇāṁ tiṣṭhantamabravid ādhava asya imāni śirṣāni chindhi

42 Downson p 321 A classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology and Religion, Neography, History and Literature

43 Udyog K 53-54
Duḥkhāni hi mahātmānaḥ prāpnuvanti yudhiṣṭhira,
Devairapi hi duhkhāni prāptāni jagatīpate
Indreṇa śrūyate rājan sabhāryeṇa mahātmanā,
Anubhūtaṁ mahādduḥkhaṁ devarājena Bhārata.

heads of the three-headed one with his axe. The heads having been cut off Indra was freed from his trepidation, gladly ment the stories or Upākhyānas were added[44] and the purpose of these stories related with men, sages and gods were to illustrate the principles of religion, philosophy and social code etc when mythical story is relold the narrator unconsciouly adjusts its details as to suit the context and to the new code of conduct though the basic principle, the archetype remains the same.

Mahābhārata charges Indra, with the sin of falsehood and Brahmicide for killing Vṛtra and Triśiras It is said when mighty Vṛtra terrible to the gods was killed, Indra became over-powered by falsehood and he became exceedingly sad ; and he was also over-powered by the sin of Brahmicide on account of having killed the three-headed, son of Tvastā. He betook himself to the confines of the worlds and became bereft of his senses and consciousness Overpowered by his own sins he could not be recognised He lay concealed in water, just like a writhing snake Later Indra was released from the sin of Brahmacide by offering the holy horse-sacrifice to Visnu

The event of Indra's slaying Namucī occurs in the Mahābhārata also. In days of yore Namucī had entered a ray of the sun from fear of Indra, Indra then made friends with Namucī and entered into an agreement with him, saying 'I shall not slay thee with anything wet or dry, in the night or in the day ' One day Indra beheld a fog and cut off the head of Namucī *with the foam of water* The severed head of Namucī thereupon said 'O slayer of a friend, O witch '[45] Indra repaired to Brahmā who caused him to perform a sacrifice and battle in Arūnā (name of the river) Thus Indra became free from the sin of Brahmicide and returned to heaven. The head of Namucī also fell into that stream of Aruṇā river and obtained eternal regions, granting every wish.

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44 Ādi. 103
Caturviṁśati sāhasrīṁ cakre bhāratasaṁhitām.
upākhyānairvinā tāvad bhārataṁ procyate budhai
45. Śalya Parva, 43.32

It seems that this event also is given to illustrate that the murder of a Brāhmana leads to a great sin and that the bathing in Arunā river destroys the sin of Brahmicide Even the heads of Namucī became eternal on account of falling into the waters of that river [46]

In the Śānti parva Namucī is presented as giving a discourse to Indra on self-control and detachment from outward circumstances. This is also illustrated by the testimony of Prahlāda and Bali, the son of Vīrocana Namucī is said to be conversant with the birth and death of all creatures and he though divested of prosperity was untroubled at heart, like the vast ocean in perfect stillness Indra being surprised asks him how could he be brought under the sway of his foes and divested of property, remain calm and without grief Namucī then explains to Indra the most valuable principle of life, "By indulging in such sorrow as cannot be warded off, one only wastes one's body and gladdens one's foes and indulgence in sorrow destroys personal comeliness, prosperity, life and virtue itself One obtains only that which has been ordained to be obtained Those sorrows and joys are obtained that are ordained to be obtained That man who knowing this fully, does not suffer himself to be stupefied, and who is contended under both happiness and sorrow is regarded as the foremost of the species"[47]

Thus in the Mahābhārata, Numucī is delineated as a great ascetic who is above the feelings of sorrow and happiness and acts as a preacher to Indra Similarly to show the sway of time on everything of the Universe, even on Indra himself, has been introduced a dialogue between Indra and Bali.[48] Bali does not hesitate to tell to Indra that the latter was an object of universal adoration in consequence of time's course

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46 Śalya Parva 43.33-38 44-45
47 Śānti 226 22 23
Labdhavyānyeva labhate gantvyānyeva gacchati,
Praptavyānyeva cāpnoti duḥkhāni la sukhāni ca
Etadviditvā kārtsnyena yo na muhyati mānavaḥ,
Kvasatī sarvaduḥkheṣu sa vai sarvadhano naraḥ
48. Śānti 297

alone[49] Gain and loss, happiness and misery, lust and wrath, birth and death, captivity and release, these are all one encounters in time's course. Bali tells to Indra, "I am not the actor, thou art not the actor, He is actor who indeed, is omnipotent."[50] Further, the Mahābhārata describes Indra himself talking about the all powerful nature of Time and praising Bali, the son of Virocana Ancient and eternal and the embodiment of justice, Time is uniform in respect of all living creatures. Time cannot be avoided and there is no retrogression in its course Wealth, comfort, rank, prosperity, all fall a prey to Time. That which is existent is only another name of non-existent In this eulogy to the Kāla or Mahākāla, can be seen the seeds of the Tāntrika philosophy, where Kāli the power of Mahākāla is regarded as the Supreme among all the gods It has been remarked that the goddess Kālī is nothing but the symbol of the power of Time who is regarded *as the destroyer of all But just as the ignition of fire is the* very soul of fire, similarly Kālī, the power of Time, is the very soul and essence of Time. Without her, Kāla becomes absolutely powerless In fact it is Kālī, and not Kāla, who destroys everything, including even absolute Time (Mahākāla), when the dissolution of the universe takes place[51] All actions of the gods are first attributed to Kāla and are accounted to be carried out due to the power of Kāla and as the position of the female deities became important, Kālī appears on the horizon and the various gods as well their unified concept, One Sat, are assimilated by Kālī and 'Indrānī' representing the powers of Indra, becomes an epithet of Kālī.

After this dialogue between Indra and Bali follows a dialogue between Śrī and Indra.[52] Śrī tells Indra[53] that she

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49. Śānti 227 28
Sukhduḥkhe hi puruṣā prayāyeṇādhigacchati,
Paryāyeṇāsi śakratvaṁ prāptaḥ śakra na karmaṇā.
50 Ibid, 227 84
Nāham kartā na kartāstvaṁ kartā yastu Sadā prabhuḥ
51. Choudhuri N N, 'A glimpse into the Tantra and its cult of Kālī', p 9.
52. Śānti 223
53. Ibid, 228 81-85.

had come to him of her own accord. "Receive me with respect O Lord of Śacī Honoured by thee, O chief of the gods, I shall receive honour from all other deities. The place where I reside, the seven other goddesses with Jayā for their eighth, desire to live. They are (Āśā) Hope, (Śraddhā) Faith (dhṛti) Intelligence, (kṣānti) contentment, (vijiti) Victory, (unnati) Advancement and (ksarā) Forgiveness. She who forms the eighth viz ; Jayā (victory), occupies the foremost place amongst them, O Indra, All of them and myself, having deserted the Asuras, have come to thy domains. We shall henceforth reside with the deities who are devoted to righteousness and faith " Thus on account of Indra's virtues which are described at length, Śrī chose to reside with Indra.

Equally significant is the dialogue between Prahlāda to king of the Daityas and Indra, the king of the gods [54] Prahlāda was unattached to all worldly objects Conversant with the origin and the destruction of all created objects, mobile and immobile, he was never angry with things that displeased him and never rejoiced at the accession of objects that were agreeable Having gained Self-realisation and absolute knowledge, he had arrived at fundamental conclusions in respect of truth

Indra with a desire to know the reality and awaken himself, approached Prahlāda and asked him about the best means by which the knowledge of the soul might be attained and by which the highest type of tranquility might be made one's own After Indra had been taught the truth, he worshipped Prahlāda and with a cheerful heart went back to his abode

In the Upaniṣads Indra is represented as going to the Supreme Brahman or Bṛhaspati etc. for the sake of knowledge The dialogues between Indra and Bali, Indra and Prahlāda and Indra and Trisiras find occurrance in this epic to illustrate the nature of Supreme knowledge but these dialogues also convince one that the position of demons has been raised and Indra goes to them to have the divine knowledge.

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54 Ibid , 222
Atrāpyudāhprantī mamitihāsaṁ purātanam
Prahladāsya ca saṁvādamindresya ca Yudhiṣṭhira.

The Brāhmaṇika influence regarding the supremacy of sacrifices is there in the Mahābhārata. The word 'kratu' has completely shed off its old meaning 'strength' and stood only for sacrifice. Through the development of religious thought and language 'Śatakratu' an epithet of Indra essentially meant a performer of hundred sacrifices. It is an accepted concept in the later Indian mythology that whoever performed a hundred sacrifices would attain the position of Indra. Consequently Indra is shown engaged in the most worthless job of disturbing the ritualistic performances On the analogy of the same the austere penances of person also endangered the position of Indra and therefore Indra is constanly trying to disturb the austere penances.

In the Ādi parva is given the story of Indra's sending Menakā to disturb Viśvāmitra[55] Then, from fear of the austerities of Dadhīca, Indra despatched the nymph Alambusa to tempt Dadhīca and thus Sārasvata was born[56]

Similarly, the prowess of Skanda also frightened gods who approached Indra with a request that he should kill Skanda, who if not conquered would overpower the three worlds and Indra himself, and thus become the mighty lord of the celestials Indra marched towards Skanda on his Airavata and the battle started. Indra hurled his thunderbolt at Skanda which pierced him on the right side and from there arose another being, a youth with a club in hand and adorned with a celestial amulet Indra beholding another person looking like the fierce destructive fire god was frightened out of his wits and besought the protection of Skanda, with the palms of his hands joined together At this Skanda bade Indra to put aside all fear The gods were also then transported with joy.

Then Skanda was requested by Indra and the sages to become the Lord of the gods. But Skanda declined the offer and said to Indra, 'Do thou continue to rule the three worlds with self-possession, and with thy heart bent on conquest.

55. Ādi. 71.72
56. Śalya. 51. 5, 6, 7

I shall remain thy humble servant. I covet not thy sovereignty. Tell me if I can obey any commands of thine.' Then Indra requested Skanda to become the commander-in-chief of the gods and took the leadership of the celestial forces. The Mahābhārata describes Skanda as the presiding deity of the power who was later on married to Devasenā, symbolising the army of gods The idea folded in the myth is related with the most important principle of autocracy Indra who represents the king of the gods would naturally be afraid of another very forceful person but at the same time try to establish amity with him, so Indra made Skanda the commandant-in chief of the forces of the gods [57]

Nahuṣa's attainment of Indra's position is repeateldy narrated in the Mahābhārata.[58] When the lord of celestials (Indra) oppressed with the dread of Brahmicide, had vanished the world having no king was overtaken by disasters, Then the sages and the superior gods decided to make Nahuṣa their Indra as he was powerful and devoted to virtue Thus Nahuṣa was crowned in the heaven as the king of gods [59] Crowned as the monarch of the heaven and Nahuṣa devoted himself to the pleasures of the heaven and finally desired to enjoy Indrāṇi, the wife of Indra Śaci saddened at hearing the news took refuge under Bṛhaspati who assured her of her union with Indra again and asked her not to have any fear from Nahuṣa At this Nahuṣa became very angry [60]

Seeing Nahuṣa enraged, the gods led by the saints spoke unto him, who was now their king of awful mien,—"O king of gods quit thy wrath That goddess is another person's wife Turn back thy inclination from the sin of outraging another's wife Thou art the king of gods, prosperity to thee Protect thy subjects in all righteousness." Nahuṣa when thus addressed rendered senseless by lust spoke to the gods in illusion to Indra—"Ahalyā of spotless fame, the wife of a saint was outraged by Indra while her husband was

57 Vana 225-228
58 Vana 179, Udyoga 11-17, Śānti, 343, Anuśāsana 100.
59 Udyyga 11 1-2 9
60 Udyoga. 11 18-20, 25-26

alive. Why did you not prevent him? Many were the deeds of inhumanity, of unrighteousness, of deceit, committed by Indra in former times. Why did not you prevent him? Let the goddess do my pleasure, that would be her permanent god And so the same will ever more rebound to your safety, you god" At this the gods agreed to bring to Nahuṣa the queen of Indra Then the gods went to Bṛhaspati[61] and beseached him to give up the queen of Indra. Bṛhaspati's resolution was however that he would not abandon one who had sought his protection and that he would not deliver Śacī. Then the gods and the Gandharvas asked Bṛhaspati to work out a sound policy. Then Bṛhaspati said, "Let this goddess ask for time from Nahusa in order to make up her mind to his proposal This will be good for Indra's queen and for us all. Time may give rise to many impediments. Time will send time onwards Nahusa is proud and powerful by virtue of the boon granted to him"[62] Then gods propitiated Indrānī and told her that various Nahusa would fall shortly and Indra would get the sovereignty of the gods and requested her to go to Nahuṣa. At this Śacī, Indra's queen having her end in her mind to attain went bashfully to Nahuṣa, who as advised by Indra, requested him to visit her riding a novel vehicle such as never belonged to Viṣṇu, Rudra or the Asuras; that vehicle should be a palanquin borne by a number of highly dignified sages. Nahuṣa did accordingly. The pure spirited Brāhmaṇas and celestial saints while carrying Nahuṣa to Indrāṇī's abode became weary with toil and questioned Nahusa about the authenticity of certain hymns of the Veda Nahuṣa who had lost his senses by the operation of the Tamas, told them that they were not authentic. The saints then told him that he was tending towards unrighteousness, at this Nahuṣa became incited by untruth and touched Agastya on his head with his foot. Consequently Nahuṣa was divested of all the power

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62 Udyoga 12 26
Bahuvighnaḥ surāḥ kālaḥ kalaḥ kālaṁ nayiṣyati,
Garvito balavānścāpi nahuṣo varsamśrayāt.

61. Udyog 12 1-9

and the lost the position of Indra and was cursed by Agastya to roam over earth for ten thousand years in the form of an anormous snake. After Nahuṣa had been hurled from heaven Indra again became the king of gods and the saints were exceedingly pleased This myth of Mahābhāratah as moral value to convey i e the Indratva or the lordiness is not possible with out such qualities as self-control, restraint and integrity.[63]

Nahuṣa, though more powerfull, had to leave the throne of Indra as he became wicked, vicious and sensuous on account of the intoxication of pride of strength. The words addressed to Indra by Agastya are very important, "O lord of Śacī, repair thou to heaven, protect the worlds, subdue thy senses subdue thy foes and be glorified by the great saints[64] He alone is Indra by whom the senses are subordinated.[65] Indra symbolizes the concept of a 'hero' who has to fall from his position as soon as he shows weakness like that of a mortal

According to the Mahābhārata the story of the victory of Indra, over Vṛtra should be listened to by a king desirous of victory[66]

Indra is indeed associated with all deeds of valour When the ocean was to be churned for nectar, it was Indra who placed the Mandāra mountain on the back of a tortoise[67] In the Śāntiparva of the Mahābhārata, Yajñavalkya while discoursing on Adhyātma, Adhibhūta and Adhidaivata associates Indra with the hands 'Indra is the Adhidaivata of hands, that is, the power behind all activity of hands is Indra[68] He is the centre of all manifest energy

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63 Udyod 17 20-22

64 Ibid, 17 19

Triviṣṭapaṁ prapadyasva pāhi lokān sacīpate,
Jitendriya jitamitro stūyamāno maharṣibhiḥ

65 The word 'Indriya' is derived by Pāṇini as 'Indriyam Indraliṅgam Indradṛṣṭaṁ Indrajuṣṭam Indradattamiti vā Aśia. 5 2 93

66 Udyog 18 16

Upākhyānamidam Śakravijayam Vedasammitam,
Rājño vyāḍeṣvanīkeṣu śrotavyam jayamicchatā

67 Ādi, 18

68 Śanti 314 4

Hastāvadhyātmamityāhuryathā saṁkhyonadarśinaḥ
Kartavyamadhibhūtam tu Indrastatrādhidaivatam.

The relation of Indra and Garuḍa as described in the Mahābhārata needs explanation Indra is stated to have fought with Garuḍa He is said to be the friend of Garuḍa At another place, he is described as identified with Garuḍa. The story is narrated in fifteen chapters (Chapters 20-34) of Ādiparva of the Mahābhārata It is being given below in an abridged form.

When the horse Uccaiśravas of great beauty was obtained from the ocean that was churned out, a controversy took place between Kadrū and Vinatā about the colour of the horse Vinatā opined that Uccaiśravas was certainly white whereas Kadrū thought that the horse was black in its tail. Moreover, Kadrū bet with Vinatā that she who lost would become the other's slave Thus wagering with each other about menial service as a slave, the sisters went home, and resolved to satisfy themselves by examining the horse next day. Kadrū bent upon practising a deception ordered her thousand sons to transform themselves into black hair and speedily cover the horse's tail in order that she might not become a slave. Next day in the morning at sunrise the two sisters Kadrū and Vinatā went with haste and impatience to view the steed Uccaiśravas from a near point As they examined that horse they found its body to be white as the rays of the moon but having black hair in the tail Thus Vinatā having lost the bet, entered into a state of slavery and her plight was miserable.

In the meantime when the time came, burst forth from the egg without (the help of his) mother, Garuḍa of great splendour, enkindling all the points of the universe, and who was capable of assuming at will any form, of going at will everywhere and of calling to his aid at will any measure of energy. And soon after his birth, that bird grew in size and ascend the skies This Garuḍa of great strength, born to promote the joy of Vinatā was the mighty son of Kaśyapa, the destroyer of Nāgas. Garuḍa is praised by the gods and in that eulogy of the gods he is identified with Indra, Viṣṇu, Prajāpati, Agni Vāyu and even Brahman and described as the all controlling

and all-pervading spirit Then Garuḍa[69] reduced his body in size and bearing Aruṇa on his back, wended from his father's home and arrived at his mother's side on the other shore of the great ocean and placed Aruna of the great splendour in the eastern regions Vinatā, defeated in wager and put into a state of slavery lived in affliction One day Kadrū in presence of Garuḍa asked Vinatā to carry her to a remote quarter inhabited by Nāgas in the midst of the ocean At this that mother of Garuḍa bore the mother of the snakes. And Garuḍa also directed by his mother carried on his back the snakes And then Garuḍa began to ascend towards the sun And thereupon the snakes scorched by the rays of the sun swooned away Kadrū seeing her sons in that state prayed to Indra for causing the downpour of rain [70] Indra adored by Kadrū covered the entire firmament with blue clouds and commanded them to pour their vivifying and blessed drops Then the sky became overcast, and the rays of the sun and the moon totally disappeared in consequence of that incessant downpour, the Nāgas became very happy and with their mother reached the island called Rāmaṇīyaka (the beautiful one)[71] where they saw the terrible Lavana Samudra (ocean of salt) The snakes enjoyed there but they commanded the Lord of birds, viz, Garuḍa to carry them to some other fair island with pure water Garuḍa asked his mother if he had to do the bidding of the snakes. Thereupon Vinatā told to Garuḍa that since she was the slave of Kadrū the order of the snakes was to be carried out Garuḍa however asked the snakes as to how he and his mother could be freed from the state of bondage to them The snakes advised him to bring Amṛta by force which could free them from the bondage.

Thus addressed by the snakes and told by his mother to eat Niṣādas in the way be after this he stretched his wings and

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69 The eulogy of Garuḍa by the extensive, it occurs in the Ādiparva, Chapter 23

70 A very long eulogy of Indra is given. In contents it has a great similarity with that of Garuḍa, it occurs in the Ādiparva, Chapter 25.

71 Ādi. 26. 1-8

ascended the skies, and soon fell upon the Niṣādas, hungry and like another Yama and raised a great quantity of dust that overspread the firmanent, and sucking up water from amid the ocean, shook the trees growing on the adjacent mountains. The Niṣādas blinded by the dust raised by the storm entered the wide extending cleft of Garuḍa's mouth open to receive them. And then the hungry Garuḍa closed his mouth killing innumerable Niṣādas proceeded with great speed towards the mountain, at which Indra and other gods resolved to protect Amṛta when they were warned by Bṛhaspati that Garuḍa was approaching to take it away.

Then an encounter took place between Garuḍa and Indra with all other gods and finally Garuḍa won and took away Amṛta And while Garuda, was coursing through the air after robbing the Amṛta, Indra hurled his thunder bolt at him Unaffected by it, Garuḍa said, 'I shall respect the sage of whose bones the Vajra has been made and also you, the performer of a thousand sacrifices I cast this feather of mine whose end you will not see Struck with your thunder I have not felt the slightest pain." Purandra thought that bird to be some great being and addressed him thus, "O best of birds, I desire to know the limit of your great strength, and I also desire eternal friendship with you." Garuḍa then agreed to have friendship with Indra Thereupon Indra asked Garuḍa to return Amrta because those to whom he would give that would always oppose the gods. Then Garuḍa said that there was a certain reason for which the Soma was being carried by him and that he would not give Soma to any one for drink. He further told to Indra that after he had placed it down Indra could bring it away. Then Garuḍa went back to the serpents and said, "Here have I brought the Amṛta, let me place it on some Kuśa grass. O snakes, sitting here drink it after you have performed your ablutions and religious rites. As said by you let my mother became free from this day, for I have accomplished your bidding !' The snakes having said unto Garḍua, 'Be it so', went to perform their ablutions. Meanwhile Śakra taking up the Amṛta, wended back to heaven."[72]

72. Ādi. 20-34

This story given in the Mahābhārata is known as Sauparṇākhyāna, and with its extravagent details covers fifteen chapters of the Ādi P. of the Mahābhārata. It appears to be a perfect fairy tale in nature. But if this story of Suparna be traced back its germs may be discovered in the Veda where 'Suparṇa' meaning a 'ray' of sun occurs in relation to Indra. And the story of the Mahābhārata indeed gives a mythological presentation of a natural phenomenon. The rays of the sun had often found a figuratue expression in the Veda. The beautifully falling rays of the sun approached Indra imploring, 'Uncover our encompassed region. Release us who are bound with shares as it were' [73] Where beautifully falling rays of the sun rush for a share of water That prosperous protector of the world, supporter (sun) has entered all that is to be matured [74] In the Brāhmana texts 'Suparna' is used in the sense of a bird.[75] And there we find an instance of substitution of the derivative meaning by the popular (Rūḍhi) meaning In the verse of the Ṛgveda, quoted above 'Vayah' is an adjective of 'Suparnah' meaning falling or mobile to be derived from the root √vī that denotes movement [76] Later the word aquired the sense of a bird In the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa however this word is a symbol of a year,[77] Puruṣa[78] or semen [79]

In Nighaṇṭu, Suparṇa is in enumerated as one of the fifteen names of a 'ray' [80] At a later stage Suparṇa was taken to be

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73. RV 10 73 11
Vayaḥ suparṇā upa sedurindram priyamedhā ṛṣayo Nādhamānāḥ,
Apa dhvāntamurṇuhi pūrdhi cakṣurmumugdhyasmānnidhayevabuddhān

74 Ibid, 1.164 21
Yatrā suparṇā amṛtasya bhagamanimeṣam vidathābhisvaranti.
Ino viśvasya bhuvanasya gopāḥ sa mā dhīraḥ pākamatrāviveśa

75. Kau B 18 4 Vayo vai Suparṇaḥ

76 √VI gativyāptiprajanakāntyasanakhādaneṣu

77 Śat B 12 2.3 7 Athavā eṣa mahāsuparna eva yatsamvatsaraḥ

78. Ibid, 7 4 2-5 Puruṣaḥ Suparṇaḥ

79 Ibid, 6 7 2 6 Vīryam vai Suparṇo garutmān

80 Nighaṇṭu, 1.5
Khedayaḥ, kiraṇāḥ, gāvaḥ, raśmayaḥ, abhīsavaḥ, dīdhitayaḥ, gabhastayaḥ, vanam, usrāḥ vasvaḥ, marīcipāḥ, mayūkhāḥ, sapta ṛṣayaḥ, sādhyāḥ, suparṇā iti raśmīnam

used only in the sense of a bird and the classical lexicons give only this meaning of the word.[81] Suparṇa means Garuḍa in the classical Sanskrit, where the old meaning of the word is not retained. The figrative expression that the rays are the horses of sun came to be understood in the Mahābhārata and the Purānas that Garuḍa is the vehicle of Viṣnu. This depicts the journey of Suparna from the Veda to the Mahābhārata. Similarly what became serpent in the Mahābhārata myth meant clouds in the Veda Nighanṭu gives 'Ahi' as a synonym of cloud and the word 'Ahi' is never used to denote cloud in the classical sanskrit where it indicates only serpent. Another very significant word in the above story is Amṛta, which is generally understood to denote nectar but the classical lexicons have preserved the other senses of the word Amarakoṣa gives Amṛta as a synonym of water [82] Infact the phenomenon of rain as a whole, described in the hymns of the Veda has been developed into such an extensive myth. Garuḍa stands for the rays of the sun , serpents stand for clouds Amṛta means water Indra is the god of rain Carrying of clouds by Garuḍa and his mother Vinita to the Nāgaloka, (Nākaloka-sky) signifies how the rays of the sun make the clouds The rays of the sun cause the waters of the earth to became vapours and form clouds Garuḍa or suparṇa viz, the ray of the sun brings Amrta for the Ahis, the clouds , the rays of the sun enrich the clouds with water. Then as soon as the rays of the sun place the water for Ahis (clouds), Indra, the god of rain takes away the Amṛta or water, that is, as soon as the clouds are formed Indra dispells the clouds and releases the waters in the form of rain, the showers of which are in no way less than nectar to the beings of the earth as well as gods who would also get their share of oblations only when the earth is prosperous. The same idea gets a poetic delineation from Kālidāsa in his Raghuvaṁśa.[83]

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81 Amarakośa, 1.1 29
Grutmān Gruḍastārkṣyo vainateyaḥ khāgeśvaraḥ,
Nāgāntako Viṣnurathaḥ Suparṇaḥ pannagāśanaḥ.

82 Ibid , 1.10.3 Payaḥ kīlālamamṛtam jīvanam bhuvam vanam.

83. Raghuvaṁśa 1 26
Dudoha gām sa yajñāya sasyāya maghvā divam.
Sampadvinimayenobhau dadhaturbhuvanadvayam.

Indra is delineated as the lord of Parjanya or clouds in the Mahābhārata The barter between earth and heaven described poetically by Kalidāsa had found its first expression in the Mahābhārata. It is said in the Śāntiparva that sacrifices gratify the deities, the deities, being gratified command the denizens of the earth to Indra. For benefitting the denizens of the earth, Indra gives them food in the form of rain without which the crops and the vegetation would fall.[84] In the Ādiparva Kadrū propitiates Indra for the sake of rain.

The worshippers however, seek Indra's favours for different ends in view Uparicara, the king of the Paurava race called also Vasu, attained a celestial car from Indra. Through that car he could course through midair like a celestial endowed with a physical frame Indra also gave him a garland of unfading lotuses, with which on, he would not be wounded by weapons That blessed and incomparable garland was widely known on earth as Indra's garland.[85] Indra also gave the king Vasu for his gratification a bamboo pole for protecting the honest and the peaceful After the expiration of a year, the king planted it in the ground for the purpose of worshipping Indra. From that time forth, all kings, following Vasu's[86] example, began to plant a pole for the celebration of Indra's worship After erecting the pole they deck it with golden cloth, scents, garlands and various ornaments And the god Indra is worshipped in due form with such garlands and ornaments Indra comes there as a swan to accept the worship

Further, it is said that those men who celebrate this festivity of Indra with gifts of land, of gems and precious stones gain great esteem in the world[86] The epic makes Indra to declare, 'Those men, and kings also, who will worship me

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84 Śānti 121 37-38
Babhūva yajño devebhyo yajñaḥ prīṇātidevatāḥ
Prītāśca devatā nityamindre parivadantyapi.
Annam dadāti śakrascāpyanugṛhvannimāḥ prajāḥ.

85 Ādi 63 13-16 86. Ādi. 63. 17-21

87 Ibid, 63 26-27
Utsavam kārayiṣyanti sadā sakrasya me narāḥ
Bhūmiratnādibhirdānaistathā pūjyā bhavanti te.

and joyously observe this festival of mime like the king of Cedi, shall have glory and victory for their countries and kingdom. There cities shall expand and be ever in joy.[88]

The above reference shows that by the time of the Mahābhārata the worship of Indra had become very popular and it was specially recommended for the Kṣatriyas for their benefit

Arjuna, the most valourous among the Pāndavas is not only called the son of Śakra but received many weapons from Indra When Indra is pleased, his ways of expressing his gratification are unique He sent his own car along with Mātali to fetch Arjuna to the Indraloka where he was duly reverenced by the celestials and the Gandharvas Arjuna lived in the palace of Indra and there he acquired all the celestial weapons together with the means of withdrawing them He received from the hands of Śakra his favourite weapon of irresistible force, viz, the thunderbolt. At the command of Indra, Arjuna lived for full five years in heaven, with all the comforts and luxuries Not only this, Indra also provided facilities to Arjuna to learn music, dancing and instrumental music which helped him to get employment in Virāṭa's house[89] Later on Indra gave also to Arjuna a golden garland and the conch-shell named Devadattā

Viśvāmitra, the son of Jamadagni, quaffed the Soma juice with Indra[90] Māndhātṛ sucked the forefinger of Indra and obtaind the seat besides him. In the words of the epic when the boy Māndhātṛ had tasted the forefinger extended by Indra, he became possessed of mighty strength and the whole sacred learning together with the holy sciences of arms, was acquired by that extremely intelligent boy[91] Indra also shared with Vasu Uparīśara his own seat and bed.

Thus it is apparent that Indra, the god of gods, if pleased would grant the fulfilment of all the wishes of the devotees.

The story of Indra's violation of Ahalyā, the wife of Gautama considered symbolically in the Brāhmaṇas[92] is fully

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88. Ādi 63 23-25 89. Vana 44

90. Vana. 87 17 Kānyakubje'pibatsomam Indreṇa saha kauśikaḥ.

91. Ibid., 126 29-38, 92. Ś B. 3.3 3.4.18

developed in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas and finds repeated occurrence in the Mahābhārata where its moral value is stressed It is taken as an actual event and the symbolism explained in the Brāhmaṇas (later in the Nirukta) is completely forgotten. In the Mahābhārata Indra is accused for solicitation, he seduced Ahalyā, the wife of the sage Gautama and that sage's curse impressed upon him a thousand marks resembling the female organ[93] At another place it is said that Indra was cursed by Gautama on account of his violating Ahalyā. So Indra had to wear a green beard.[94]

In the Mahābhārata also Indra is called the father of Arjuna. It is also said that Śiva along with four Indras became incarnate as the five Pāndavas[95] It is stated that the birth of Ghatotkaca was caused by Maghavan.

In the Ādiparva is given a very long account of the burning of Khāndavavana, that was protected by Indra Agni secured the aid of Arjuna and Kṛsna and gave them celestial weapons. Arjuna and Kṛsna are described as Nara and Nārāyana, the old deities who assisted Agni to burn the Khāndava forest and did not let even a single being escape that forest Then Indra beholding what Agni was doing, set out for the protection of the forest He soon covering the sky with masses of clouds began to shower rain upon the burning forest, but the showers were all dried up in the sky itself by the heat of the fire and could not therefore, reach the fire at all Then Indra getting angry with Agni collected huge masses of clouds and caused them to yield a heavy downpour Then that forest with the flames contending with those heavy showers and with masses of clouds overhead and filled with smoke and flashes of lightning, became terrible to behold Then Arjuna soon covered the forest of Khāndava with innumerable arrows, but he was made unconscious by Indra At that Arjuna became very angry and hurled the most excellent weapons to destroy the clouds which were charged with torrents of rain and thus those clouds

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93 Śānti 267
94 Śānti 343
95 Ādi. 197

were all dried up. Then the battle took place between Indra along with other gods and Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa, but the gods could not defeat Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa and Indra went back to heaven.[96]

In the end, however, when the Khāṇḍava forest had been completely burnt, Indra along with Maruts descended from heaven and asked Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa to choose a boon. Then Pārtha demanded from Indra all his weapons and Vāsudeva prayed that his friendship with Arjuna might be enternal. Indra granted these two boons to Pārtha and Kṛṣṇa and ascended to heaven[97]

The Mahābhārata shows that Indra always helped the Pāṇḍavas, who won the battle of Khurukṣetra. It shows that even at the time of Mahābhārata it was believed that victory belonged to that party, which was favoured by Indra. Arjuna spent five years with Indra in heaven and learnt the use of heavenly weapons and also acquired the weapons from Indra In the Vanaparva it is said that Indra himself paid the Pāṇḍavas a visit Indra symbolizes unsurpassable energy and vigour and therefore Arjuna being the best warrior among the Pāṇḍavas is called the son of Indra Five Pāṇḍavas are said to be the incarnations of the five Indras and Draupadī an incarnation of Lakṣmī [98]

Indradhvaja or the banner of Indra represents the banner of victory. Indra's indulgence in political deception is also most probably due to his being the god of kings. In the guise of a Brāhmaṇa, Indra went to Karṇa and asked his coat of mail and earings on account of which he was considered unassilable so that Arjuna might be able to kill Karṇa in the battle.[99] Indra went to the mountain Niṣidha and lived there in disguise untill he had destroyed his foes.[100]

Thus Indra is variously portrayed in this epic of all encompassing nature. Here is found the religious, philosophical,

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96 Ādi. 224-230 97. Ādi. 234.9,13 140

98 Ādi. 197.35
Evamete Paṇḍavāḥ saṁbabhūvurye te rājanpūrvamindrā babhūvuḥ.
Lakṣmīścaiṣam pūrvamevopadiṣṭā bhāryā yaiṣā Droupadī divyarūpā.

99 Vana 309 100. Vāna. 315. 13

historical, allegorical and mythical development of the concept of Indra and in the process innumerable paramyths have been created Moreovere the Mahābhārata also stresses the symbolic meaning of the mythical delineations Says the epic that Indra is only a 'name'. In the Pauṣyaparva of the Ādiparva we not only find the figurative expression of the concept of Indra as the Supreme Man in the universe but also its explanations. "The wheel whose circumference is marked by twenty four divisions representing as many lunar changes is furnished with three hundred spokes. It is set in continual motion by six boys There are two damsels representing universal nature who are weaving without intermission a cloth with threads black and white, and thereby ushering into existence the manifold worlds and the beings that inhabit them Thou weilder of the thunder, the protector of the universe, the slayer of Vrtra and Namucī, thou illustrious one who wearest the black cloth and displayest truth and untruth in the universe, thou who ownst for thy carrier, the horse which was received from the depths of the ocean, and which is but another form of Agni (the god of fire), I bow to thee, thou supreme Lord, thou Lord of the three worlds, O Purandara [101]

The picture given is thus explained in the epic itself The two demsels are Dhātā and Vidhātā, the black and white threads denot night and day, the wheel of twelve spokes turned by the six boys signified the year comprising six seasons. The man is Parjanya, the deity of rain and the horse is Agni, the god of fire The bull on the road is Airāvata, the king of

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101 Ādi 3 146-149

Trīnyarpitānyatra satāni madhye ṣaṣtisca nityam carati dhruve'smin,
Cakre caturvimśatiparvayoge ṣaḍ vai kumārāh privartayanti
Tantram cedam visvarūpe yuvatyou vayatastantūnsatatam vartayantau,
Kṛṣnānsitamścaiva vivartayantyou bhūtānyajastram bhuvanāni caiva,
Vajrasya Bhartā bhuvanasyagopta vṛtrasya hantā Namucernihantā,
Kṛṣne vasāno vasane mahātmā satyānṛte yo vivinakti loke
Yo vājinaṁ garbhamapām purāṇam vaiśvānaram vāhanamabhyupaiti,
Namo'stu tasmai Jagadīśvarāya lokatrayesāya Purandarāya

elephants, the man mounted thereon is Indra, the Puruṣa, the lord of the three worlds [102]

The allegory and its explanation given above illustrates the fundmental concept regarding Indra in the Mahābhārata and the same is displayed in repeated eulogies of Indra. He is the god of gods and the divine bliss.[103] Thus Indra is identical with the Supreme Being

VARUNA IN THE MAHĀBHĀRATA

Varuna, the son of Aditi, is one of the Lokapālas and has his home in the waters Varuṇa is one of the Ādityas and is armed with nooses The description of Varuṇa is marked with the above mentioned characteristics everywhere in the Mahābhārata 'Varuna the god of waters is handsome and endowed with the splendour of the lapis lazuali. Accompanied by all kinds of aquatic creatures, rivers, nāgas, daityas and Sādhyas he fills all the points of the horizon with a blazing effulgence.''[104]

Varuna is one of the twelve Ādityas[105] and is sometimes called the fifth of them [106] The western direction is supposed to be ruled over by Varuṇa It is said in the Udyogaparva that

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102 Ādi 3 166-168
Ye te striyau dhātā vidhātā ca ye ca te kṛṣṇāḥ
Sitāstantavaste rātryahanī, yadapi taccakraṁ
dvādaśāram ṣadvai kumārāḥ parivartayanti
te'pi ṣaḍṛtavaḥ saṁvatsaraścakram
Yah Puruṣaḥ sa parjanyo yo'śvaḥ so'gnirya ṛṣabhastvayā pathi gacchatā dṛṣtaḥ sa airāvato nāgarat
Yaścainamadhirūḍhaḥ Puruṣaḥ sa cendraḥ.

103 Ibid , 25 13
Tvam sarvamamṛtaṁ deva tvam somaḥ paramārcitaḥ

104 Ibid , 225 1-2
Vana 41 5-6
Tato vaidūrya bhāsayansarvato disaḥ,
Yādo gaṇavṛtaḥ śrīmānājagāma jaleśvaraḥ
Nagairnadairnadībhiśca daityai sādhyaiśca daivatai,
Varuṇo yādasām bhartā vaśī tam deśamāgataḥ

105 Ibid , 123 67

106. Ibid., 65 15-16 Śānti 208 15-16

Kaśyapa installed Varuṇa in the west as the ruler of all directions, acquatic animals and waters. The lord of waters had his origin here and it is here that his sovereignty lies. It is here that towards day's end the sun dismisses his rays that this quarter is called the west[107] In this western direction ruled by Varuṇa, the moon becomes young in the beginning of the fortnight The Mahābhārata gives a long description of this quarter of Varuna and this account is illustrative as how different things came to be associated with this god

It was in this quarter, that the daityas were routed and bound fast by the wind-god. Hither is that mountain called Asta (where the sun sets), which is the cause of the evening-twilight, and which daily receives the sun lovingly turning towards it It is from this quarter that both night and sleep, issuing out at the close of the day, spread themselves, as if, for robbing all living creatures of half their alloted periods of life. It was here that Śakra beholding the goddess Diti lying asleep in a state of pregnancy, cut off the foetus into fortynine parts whence sprang the fortynine Maruts It is twards this direction that the roots of Himavat stretch towards the eternal Mandara By journeying for even a thousand years one cannot attian to the end of those routes It is in this region that Surabhi, repairing to shores of the extensive lake, adorned with golden lotuses, pourth forth her milk. Here in the midst of the ocean is seen the headless trunk of the illustrious Swarbhantt who is alway bent upon devouring both sun and the moon Here is heard the chanting of the Vedas by Suvarnaśiras, who is invincible and of immeasurable energy and whose hair is eternally green It is in this region that the daughter of Muni Harimedhas remained transfixed in the welkin in consequence of Sūrya's injunction couched in the words, 'stop, stop'. In the region of Varuna wind, fire, earth and water are all free, both day and night from their painful sensations

From this region of Varuna, according to the Mahābhārata the course of sun begins to deviate from the straight path and

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107 Udyoga 110. 1-3

it is in this direction that all the constellations enter the solar sphere. And having moved for twenty-eight nights with the sun, they come out of the sun's course to move in accompaniment with the moon. It is in this region that the rivers which always feed the ocean have their sources. Here in the abode of Varuṇa, are the waters of the three worlds. In this region is situated the abode of Ananta, the prince of snakes And here is the unrivalled abode also of Viṣṇu, who is without beginning and without end. In this region of Varuṇa is also situated the abode of the greate Ṛṣi Kaśyapa, the son of Marica.[108]

Since Varuna is conceived as a Lokapāla of heaven, the kingdom of this king consists of the western direction. This association of Varuna with the western quarter came to be recognised because Varuṇa stood for the god of night which originated as if from the western quarter which is called so because the sun dismisses his rays here at the end of the day[109] It has been shown before that Varuna philosophically stood for Māyā or the Prakṛti characterized by its negative aspect of concealment that hides the reality Mitra and Varuṇa occurring together as Mitrāvarunā indeed indicate the spirit and the matter or Brahman and his Śakti. The manifest or the matter or the Śakti conceals the Unmanifest, the Spirit or the Brahman but they are separate from the latter. So Varuṇa is that who conceals the Reality or the Absolute but is essentially identified with the Reality or the Absolute Mitra and Varuna are indeed the two aspects of the same entity. One is the positive aspect and other is the negative aspect. Later on Mitra and Varuna are figuratively associated with the day and night in the Atharvaveda[110] Brāhmanas also speak of this symbolic association but also retain its meaning which is lost in the epics and the figurative image overcame philosophical concept completely and Varuṇa came to be recognised as the lord of night and consequently of the western direction.

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108 Udyog 110

109 Ibid , 1102
Atra paścāḍaḥ sūryo visarjayati gāḥ svayam.
Paścimety aBhivikhyātā digiyam dvijasattam,

110 AV 9 3 18

Similarly, has also fallen in oblivion the philosophical import of the word Salila, occurring in the Nāsadīya Sūkta signifying two-fold aspect of the Prakṛti, the unmanifest and the manifest; in the first stage the discrimination between the existent and the non-existent, the form and the formless is not be found, whereas to in the second stage the Divine desire or will to become manifold exists The word Āpaḥ meant 'action or movement' in the Ṛgveda In the Nighantu it has been innumerated as a synonym of karma, an action or gati, a movement So all activity, and movement depends upon the Māyā of Varuna so he was called the lord of Āpaḥ in the Veda. But in the Mahābhārata the waters associated with Varuṇa indicate simple waters and Varuna is called Salileśvara and is made the king of all the rivers, lakes and oceans.

Samudriya, meant the place of origin of the whole evolution or Āpaḥ, that is the Supreme Being Sāyanācārya explains the word Samudra as to mean One to whom all beings go and from whom all beings come out [111] In the Mahābhārata, however, Samudra or Āpaḥ meant the waters and Varuna is supposed to have ocean as his abode He is called the lord of waters [112] But it must be pointed out that though the word Āpaḥ or Salila means only 'water' so far as the Varuna myth is concerned yet the philosophical meaning of the word indicating cosmic waters is present in the Mahābhārata Āpah is equivalent to the infinite unmanifest cause which is the primeval source of all possibilities of existence.[113] The oceans remain under the lordship of Varuṇa, they are encompassed by his sovereign might Vṛtra is Varuṇa's arch agent, the enveloping Asura who is lying asleep at every point of the Ocean Indra emerges as the great god to challange

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111 On RV X 125 7
Samudravantyasmadbhūtajātānīti samudra paramātmā,

112 Vana 55 4,
Udyoga 162 Sāgaro Varunālayaḥ

113 Śānti
Narānāmayanam khyānamahamekah sanātanah
Āpo nāga iti proktā vai nara sūnavah
Ayanam mama tatparvamato Nārāyaṇo hyayam

him, to overcome him and release the flow of waters. According to his Agrawala Indra is the principle of Hiraṇyagarbha,[114] or the gold pinioned Bird (Hiraṇyapakṣa Śakuni), i.e. the sun.

Harivaṁśa describes these primeval watery floods as enveloped by a nebulous frost.[115]

Moreover the synonymous use of the word Tama and Āpah in the philosophical language right from the Ṛgveda due to the enveloping nature of these cosmic waters explains the association of night with Varuna According to the naturalistic interpretation Varuṇa is the god of the blue sky, the Samudra in which are merged all luminaries and heavenly things, and on which appear the clouds, the Ahis This explains the presence of snakes, Daityas and Dānavas in the region, the abode and the court of Varuṇa in the myths of the Mahābhārata

The assembly hall of Varuna is beautifully delineated in the Mahābhārata. It is unparalleled in splendour In dimensions it is similar to that of Yama, which covers more than a hundred yojanas. Its walls and arches are all of pure white. It has been built by Viśvakarman, the celestial architect within the waters It is surrounded on all sides by many celestial trees made of gems and jewels and yielding excellent fruits and flowers. Many plants bent down with the weight of blossoms which are blue yellow, black darkish, white and red, stand there. There are excellent bowers around and with in those bowers hundreds and thousands of birds of diverse species, beautiful and variegated always pour forth their melodies. The atmospher of that mansion is extremely delightful. Owned by Varuna. that estatic assembly house of pure white consists of many rooms and is furnished with many seats[116]

Equally ravishing is the portraiture of Varuṇa seated in that lovely assembly hall. Attired in celestial robe and decked

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114 Vide 'Hiraṇyagarbha' by Vasudeva S Agrawala occuring in 'Purāṇam II Vol Nos 1-2, July 1960, published by the All India Kashiraj Trust, Varanasi

115 Harivamśa. 3 10.31

116 Sabhā Parva. 99 1 5.

in celestial ornaments and jewels with his queen adorned with heavenly scents and besmeared with paste of supernal fragrance Varuṇa sits in that assembly hall The Ādityas wait upon and worship Varuna, the lord of waters. And Vasuki and Taksaka and the Nāgas called Airavana, Kṛṣna, Lohita, Padma Chitra, Kamvala, Aśvatara, Dhṛtarāṣṭra, Valahaka Marimat, Kuṇḍadhāra Karkotaka, Dhanañjaya, Pāṛimat, mighty Kundaka, Prahrāda, Mūshikāda and Janamejaya—all holding auspicious marks and extended hoods and many other snakes wait upon and worship illustrious Varuna [117]

Not only do the Ādityas and the Nāgas of various names wait upon Varuna but the daityas and the Dānavas also serve him. Bali, the son of Virocana and Naraka, the subjugator of the entire earth, Saṁhrāda, Vipracitti, Kālakhañja, Suhanu, Durmukha, Śankha, Sumati, Ghatodara, Mahāpārśva, Krathana, Pithara, Viśvarūpa, Virūpa, Svarūpa, Daśagrīva, Valī, Meghavāsas, Daśāvara, Tittibha, Vitabhūta, Saṁhrāda and Indratāpana -all these daityas and Dānavas who are decked with earings, floral wreaths, crowns and celestial robes and blessed with boons, great bravery and the bliss of immortality wait upon and worship in that mansion the illustrious Varuna, the deity bearing the noose as his weapon [118]

Further, all the oceans and the rivers in their personified form are supposed to be waiting upon Varuṇa because he is the lord of waters The four oceans and the rivers named Bhāgirathī, Kālindī, Vidisā, Venā, Narmadā of rapid current Vipāśā, Shatadrū, Candrabhāgā, Sarasvati, Irāvati, Vitastā Sindhu Devanadī, Godāvarī, Kriṣṇavenā, Kaverī, Kimpunā, Viśalyā, Vaitranī, Tritīyā, Jyeṣṭhilā, Śoṇā, Carmaṇvatī, Parnāśā, Sarayū, Vāravatyā, Langalī, Karatoyā, Ātreyī, Mahānadī, Langhatī, Gomatī, Sandhyā and Trisrotasī, in personified forms tend king Varuṇa. Other rivers of sacred nature, that are the world renowned places of pilgrimage and also other rivers, waters, lakes, wells, springs and tanks large or small in a human form wait upon king Vauṇa.[119]

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117. Sabhā. 9 6-11
118 Ibid, 9 12-17
119 Ibid, 9 18-25

The points of the heavens, the earth and all the mountains as also every species of aquatic animals, all worship Varuṇa there. Various tribes of Gandharvas and heavenly nymphs devoted to music both vocal and instrumental wait upon Varuṇa, singing eulogistic hymus unto him. And all those mountains that are noted for being both delightful and rich in jewels wait in their personified forms in that Sabhā of Varuṇa The chief minister of Varuṇa is Sanābha who surrounded by his sons and grandsons attends upon his master along with a sacred water named 'Go' All, These in their personified form minister to Varuna [120]

The nether region is also ascribed to Varuna [121] A detailed description of Nāgaloka, the place of Varuna, is given in the Udyogaparva (98) where it is said that Nārada accompanied by Mātali visited it

Nooses associated with Veruṇa in the Vedas, Brāhmanas and the Upanisads are not consigned to oblivion in the Mahābhārata [122] Mahābhārata has given a beautiful picture of the marching of the gods when Skanda was anointed as leader of the celestial army There Varuna, the adorable lord of waters is described as possessed of his noose (Pāśa) and surrounded by numerous acquatic animals marching slowly with the trident [123]

In the Khāndavadāha Parva where all the gods with Śakra at their head are depicted laced up with their respective armours and weapons when an encounter started between Arjuna and Indra, Varuna is depicted as furnished with his noose and a beautiful missile [124] So Varuna is often called Pāśabhṛt, Ugrapāśa, Pāśin, Pāśavān etc.

The noose of Varuna is characterised with the power of siezing and tying the foes, the demons and the sinners.[125]

It is surprising that the most important trait of Varuṇa's character, i e his command over Ṛta has been forgotten in the Mahābhārata

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120 Sabhā. 9 25-29

121. Udyoga 108 12
Atra pātālamāśritya Varuṇaḥ sriyamāpa ca.

122 Bhīṣma 50.7

123 Vana. 231.38

124. Ādi. 227 31-32

125. Vana. 40.28-29

Varuṇa gave his celestial weapons to Arjuna before the burning of the Khāṇḍava forest at the request of the god Agni. Agni beseeched Varuṇa to give him the Gāṇḍīva and the ape-banner car, that he had obtained from Soma for Arjuna. Mahābhārata gives a beautiful description of the car. "The car that Varuṇa gave to Arjuna had been created by Viśvakarman, the architect of the universe and one of the lords of creation, after severe ascetic meditation Its splendour, like that of the sun was so great that no one could gaze at it Resplendent with beauty, it looked like an evening could reflecting the effulgence of the setting sun It was also furnished with an excellent flag staff of golden colour and great beauty, and on that flag staff sat a celestial ape, in form fierce as a lion or a tiger "[126]

At the same time Varuna gave to Kṛṣṇa a mace, capable of slaying every Daitya and producing when hurled, a roar like that of thunder That mace given by Lord Varuna was known as Kaumodakī [127]

In the Kairātaparva it is said that the four Lokapālas gave Arjuna their weapons and Varuna gave his nooses and other armament with the misteries of hurling and withdrawing them [128] Ricīka is said to have obtained a thous ud steeds of lunar brightness from Varuna [129]

Varuna granted a boon to Nala also After Damayntī had chosen Nala as her husband the Lokapālas bestowed on Nala eight boons Varuna, the lord of waters, granted Nala his own presence whenever he desired and also garlands of celestial fragrance [130]

Vāruṇī is called the wife of Varuna in the Mahābhārata [131] In the Ādiparva Varuṇa is said to be the husband of Devī, the daughter of Śukra and father of Bala and Surā.[132] The Udyogaparva says that Varuna was the husband of Gouri.[133]

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126 Ādi 225 3-15
127 Ādi 225 28
128. Vana 41 27 32
129 Udyoga 119.5-6, Vana. 115 26-27
130 Vana 57.38
131 Sabhā 996
132 Ādi 66 52
133 Udyoga 117

Along with Bala and Surā, Vandin is known to be the son of Varuṇa in the Vanaparva. Vandin, Varuṇa's son defeated Brāhmaṇas in controversies and caused them to be drowned into water that they might come to the sacrifice of Varuṇa and officiate there. Vandin is spoken of as a great philosopher in the epic.[134] Puṣkara is also mentioned as the son of Varuṇa and was endowed with character and purity.[135] Śrutāyudha is another son of Varuṇa, whom Varuṇa gave his heavenly weapon. Parṇāśā is mentioned as the mother of Śrutāyudha[136]

In the religion of the Mahābhārata, great importance is attached to the pilgrimages which are enumerated at details in the Mahābhārata. All the rivers and the spots near ocean which are considered to be the places of pilgrimage are supposed to belong to Varuna[137] The pilgrimage named Taijas also is said to belong to Varuṇa. At this place king Varuṇa, the lord of the waters, was anointed by the gods.[138] Varuṇa began duly to protect seas, lakes, rivers and other receptacles of water as Indra protects the gods.[139] If we interpret the verse taking the symbolical meaning of the 'waters' (i.e. the primeval matter) and the 'gods' (i.e. the principles of consciousness manifest in the creative process) the fields of Varuna and Indra are well-defined and at the same time their complementary relationship is re-asserted.

Varuṇa is said to have performed austerities at Viśākha-yūpa along with Indra and other gods[140] Mahābhārata also records a Rājasūya yajña performed by the mythical being at Yamunā Tīrtha.[141] He worshipped Śiva at Mūjavat.

Thus in the Mahābhārata, Varuṇa is fully personified and his mythical personality has completely uncoiled itself. This is indeed very normal and natural to find the deity, symbolising a philosophical concept or phenomena of mystic experience, changing into a legendary figure in the

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134 Vana 134.24-25

135 Udyoga 98 11-12

136. Droṇa, 92, 44, 50

137 Śalya. 47.5-13

138. Śalya. 46.105

139. Ibid , 47.12

140. Vana 90.15

141. Śalya. 49,12

epic. The Veda is not comprehensible to the common man, due to its sophisticated symbology and poetic mysticism. The well-known dictum is that the Veda should be well amplified by means of Itihāsa and Purāṇa and that the Veda fears a man of little knowledge as he might harm it. So it was the objec tive of the epics and the Purāṇas to present the truth in a form that might be comprehended by the masses and the medium of legend to communicate religious and philosophical ideas has been very successful for the simple fact that, to quote M.L Hariyapa, for an average man with his preoccupations and his class forms the teeming millions—a set of prepared ideas about the Supreme power is necessary, ideas which emanate from thinkers or prophets who have had communion with the Holy God The average man, again, would feel gratified to find some concrete story on which his faith can lay anchor, or even some concrete object on which he can superimpose all his concepts of God, the Gracious and the all powerful.[142]

But a philosophic mind would allow no foothold for the imaginative and fanciful myths of the gods and the angels So though the epic is to illustrate the highest types of truths to the common man and is full of such legends, stories and myths that serve this purpose,[143] yet, it provids enough material for the intellectual to brood and for the philosopher to contemplate. Thus we find in the epic passages containing high degree of philosophy as well as the famous treatise named Bhagvadgītā, where the fundamental unity of the various gods is established

Varuṇa is identified with Śiva when conceived as the supreme spirit. Its oneness with Viṣṇu, Brahmā, Indra, Suparna, Rudra,

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142 Ṛgvedic Legends through the Ages p 135

143. Ādi 1 62-63 87

Brahmanvedarahasyañca yaccānyatsthāpitaṁ mayā,
Sāṅgopaniṣadām caiva vedānam vistarakriyā
Itihāsapurāṇānāmunmeṣam nirmitam ca yat,
Bhūtam bhavyam bhaviṣyam ca trividhaṁ kālasaṁjñitam.
Itihāsapradīpena mohāvarṇaghātinā.
Lokagarbhagṛham kṛtsnaṁ yathāvatsaṁprakāśitam.

etc., is recognized when they are described as non-different from the Absolute[144] who is called Brahman, Ātman or Paramātman and is described as unconditioned, unmanifest, self-subsisting and all pervading. The different gods are only the manifest or apprehensible (sa-guṇa) forms of the Unmanifest Ātman[145] So the Mahābhārata though variously presents the god Varuna in its innumerable myths and legends yet it does not forget the basic concept about his real nature, i.e. identity with the Supreme and at the same time sets forth in very clear terms, while discussing Puruṣa and Prakṛti, that phenomenally Varuṇa is the Prakṛti and Mitra, who is non-different from Indra, is the Purusa[146] as is depicted in the Vedas They represent the concept of complementary cosmic dualism

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144. Bhiṣma 35 39
Vāyuryamo'gnirvaruṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ prajāpatistvaṁ prapitāmahaśca.
Namo namaste'stu sahasrakṛtvaḥ... .
145 Karṇa 33 51
Ekaṁ ca bhagavantam te nānārūpamakalpayan,
Ātmanaḥ pratirūpāṇi rūpānyatha mahātmani.
146 Śānti 318 39
Tathaiva Mitraṁ puruṣaṁ Varuṇaṁ prakṛtiṁ tathā.

6

INDRA AND VARUNA IN THE PURĀṆAS

When the Ṛsis were departing, the mortals wanted to know from the celestials (Devas) as to who was going to be their Ṛṣi To them the gods gave the Ṛsi named Tarka, the subtle reasoning faculty[1] But all the human beings are not possessed of that fine intellectual tenuity so the need for the amplification of the truth of the Veda was felt It is an ancient dictum that the Veda should be well amplified by means of the Itihāsa and the Purāṇa, the Veda fears a man of little knowledge as he might maim it thereby.[2] Thus the ancient lore Itihāsa and Purāna was given the rank of an Upaveda and is distinctive by its rendering a helping hand in understanding the concept of truth.[3] The Purāna and the Itihāsa are referred to in the Atharveda Itihāsa does not denote merely an event that took place—but an event that would always happen and repeat itself in certain circumstances It is derived as 'Iti-ha-āsa' The conjugational form āsa is indicative of present tense in old Vedic Sanskrit Itihāsa stands for those historical events and legends which always have a precise objective cultural content Thus the Purānic myths bear the eternal fundamental principles or the archetypes In the Taittirīya

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1 Nirukta 13
Manuṣyā vā ṛṣiṣūtkrāmatsu devānabruvan, ko na ṛṣirbhaviṣyatīti tebhyaḥ etam tarkam ṛṣim prāyacchan mantrārthacintābhyūham tasmāt yadevam kiñcānucāno'bhyūhatyārṣam tadbhavati.

2 Vāyu 2 18 1
Itihāsapurāṇābhyam Vedam samupabṛmhayeta
Bibhetyalpaśrutād vedo māmayam praharediti.

3 Ahi Sam 13 38-39
Itihāsapurāṇākhya upavedo hi ya smṛtaḥ
sahāyabhāvam śāstrāṇām tattvajñāne vrajatyasau.

Brāhmaṇa, the Baudhāyana Dharma Sūtra and the Chhāndogyopaniṣad the collective name Itihāsapurāṇa is used since both of them are the vehicles of culture as a whole.[4] Winternitz opines that 'similar to the Vedic Samhitās there existed one or several collections of Itihāsa and Purānas, made up of myths and legends of gods and tales of demons, snake deities, old sages and kings of ancient times.'[5] It is said in the Matsya Purāṇa that there was only one Purāṇa[6] and the Purāṇa was therefore as much history as myth.[7] The Brahmavaivarta Purāna[8] neverthless regards the Epics as Itihāsa and as distinct from the Purāna. According to the evidence furnished by the Matsya Purāṇa, Mahābhārata was composed by Vyāsa after the compilation of all the Purāṇas. It is the accepted opinion that the extant Purāṇas are on the whole later than the extant Mahābhārata, and the former at their earlier stage might have preceded the Mahābhārata. This is also supported by the Dharma Sūtras' acquaintance with the Purāṇas.

Thus the Purānas were written to illustrate and expound the 'truth of the Vedas'. The Chhāndogyopaniṣad gives the status of the fifth Veda to the Itihāsapurāṇa[10] The Purāṇa is supposed to expound the truth of the Veda[11] and the pupular mind was convinced of the authority and the sanctity of the Purānas[12]

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4 AV, 15 6 11
Tamitihāsaśca purānam ca gāthāśca nārāśamsīścānuvyacalan
Ibid, 10 4 8
Ṛcah sāmāni chandāmsi purāṇam yajuṣā saha

5 A History of Indian Literature Vol I, p 313

6 Matsya 53 3
Purāṇamekamevāsīt tadā kalpāntare'nagha

7 Siddheśvara Bhattāchārya The philosophy of the Śrīmad Bhāgavata Vol I Introduction p i

8 Brahma Vaivarta 4 131 22
Itihāso Bhāratañca Vālmīkikāvyameva ca

9 Matsya 53 69

10 Ch U, 7 1 7
Itihāsapurāṇaṁ pañcamam Vedānām Vedam.

11, Vāyu 1 9
Purāṇam Vedasammitam.

12. Nārada 1 9 37
Sarvavedārthasārāṇīti bhūpate.

The fundamental abstruse philosophical and religious truths were attempted to be expounded through the medium of legend, a method found always very fruitful. "Nothing can exert greater credence on the human mind than when it is described as having happened. 'Thus indeed it was' (Iti-ha-āsa) combined with narration, a stamp of authority And when now and then, an appeal is made to former authorities by means of statements like, Atrāpyudāharantīmam itihāsaṁ purātanam etc , the belief is firmly rooted".[13]

There is a deep yearning of the soul which is fascinated by the 'adbhuta' and the 'acintya' in God, the *mysterium tremendum*; and which ultimately leads him to rapturous emotions of love and surrender to the great God. This is named by Prof Otto as the "numinous in man".[14] So the truth is represented in such a way in the Purāṇa as to foster the "numinous". The result of this factor is that not only numberless legends concerning the gods and the seers were composed but all that could be Adbhuta or wonderful attributed to the object of worship. Technically the Purānas have five characteristic topics as their subject—creation; recreation i.e periodical annihilation and renewal of the worlds, genealogy (of gods and Ṛsis), the millennia i e the great periods each of which has a Manu or primal ancestor of the human race; and the history of the dynasties viz., early and later dynasties whose origin is traced back to the sun (solar dynasty) and the moon (lunar dynasty) [15] But the Purāṇas do not adhere to these topics alone and are didactic in nature, their main aim being the illustration of the ethical, social, philosophical and religious doctrines through the simple mould of legends, stories and easy language

The Purāna is enumerated as one of the fourteen branches

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13 Hariyappa H L , Ṛgvedic legends through ages, p 135

14 Yamunacharya, M., 'Prof Rudolf Otto's Concept of the 'numinous' and its relation to Indian thought, ' published by Mysore U J Vol VII No 2 , March 1947

15 Sargaśca pratisargaśca vamśo manvantarāṇi ca
Vamsānucaritam ceti purāṇaṁ pañcalakṣaṇam.

of learning,[16] A scholar versed in the Purāṇic lore has been designated a Paurāṇika or *Purāṇajña*

The keynote of Indian religion and philosophy is the doctrine of One Reality. The Vedas, The Brāhmaṇas, the Upaniṣads and the Itihāsapurāṇa, all attempt to provide a glimpse of that Supreme Truth through its manifold manifestations. The Trinity's conception and development has already been seen in the Mahābhārata Though this Trinity of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva reaches its zenith of development in the Purāṇas, yet this phenomenon of Purāṇic pantheon should not create any dilemma for a serious student of the Purāṇas who cannot miss the real trend of the Purāṇic thought. The Purānas say repeatedly that the same divinity assumes the names of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Śiva respectively for cosmic creation, preservation and destruction that represent three aspects of one process[17] Various rules and ceremonies are prescribed with the ultimate aim that they may help to realize the final end, One Reality (Ekaṁ Sat). The Purāṇas are replete with statements voicing this fundamental truth

At the same time it is also very true that the truth is presented in the obscure garb of legends of divine, heroic and cosmological nature. The description of the super human beings and of other worlds than this, are glorified accounts of the unknown recorded on the analogy of the known.'[18]

These myths and legends, classified as meteorological, physical, historical, ritualistic, artistic, ethical, mystical and allegorical and so on have their source often in individual imagination The modern scholars of the Purānas are trying to interpret these legendary and mythical accounts of the Purāṇas on various lines "A statement should always be

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16 Viṣṇu P, 3 6 28
Aṅgāni Vedāścatvāro mīmāmsā nyāyavistaraḥ,
Purāṇam dharmaśāstram ca vidyā hyetāścaturdaśa.

17 Ibid 1 2 66
Sṛṣṭisthityantakaraṇīm brahmaviṣṇuśivātmikām.
Sa sanjñām yāti bhagavān eka eva janārdanaḥ
Matsya 3 16
Ekā mūrtistrayo bhāgā Brahmaviṣṇumaheśvarāḥ.

18. Hopkins, Ethics of India

interpreted in the light of the spirit of that statement, and with full consideration of the real object of the speaker with which he has made the statement So in order to arrive at correct interpretation of the Purāṇic statements, we should always keep in view the real spirit of the Purāṇas and the object with which the statement was made. The Purāṇic style of exaggeration should also be given proper allowance in interpreting the historical and geographical accounts of the Purānas. Chronological considerations and archaeological data may also be helpful in interpreting the Purāṇas, specially their chapters on history and archaeology."[19]

While giving the Purāṇic account of Indra and Varuṇa, we may take up certain sketches of the deities for interpretation It must be made clear at the outset that we come across attempts of interpretations in the Purāṇas themselves The etymological, symbolical, mythological, figurative (Aupacārika), factual and ontological interpretations are all found in the Purāṇas Contradictions in the different accounts of the same event are explained by means of Yuga Kalpa theory. The ephithets of Viṣṇu are fully derived in the Matsya Purāna,[20] and of Brahmā in the Vāyu Purāṇa[21] and so on The two Asuras Madhu and Kaiṭabha are symbolically interpreted as Tamas and Rajas covering the whole universe[22] and also as Artha and Kāma in the Matsya Purāna[23] An example of figurative interpretation is attempted to explain why creation is called the day, and dissolution, the night of Brahmā. It is said that in reality there is no day or night and the account is only metaphorical for the understanding of the common man.[24]

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19 Gupta, A S 'The Problem of interpretation of the Purāṇa', published in 'Purāṇam' Vol VI No 1 January 1964

20 Matsya , 248 34 49

21 Vāyu , 5 37-42

22 Matsya , 173 14
Āvābhyām chādyate viśvam tamasā rajasā'tha vai.

23 Ibid , 170 16

24 Vāyu , 6 2 3
Ahastasya tu yā sṛṣṭiḥ pralayo rātrirucyate.
Ahasca vidyate tasya na rātririti dhāraṇā
Upacāraḥ prakriyate lokānām hitakāmyayā.

This idea had been thus expressed in the Ṛgveda that the accounts of the battles of Indra are only metaphorical, for Indra has no enemy, and so all his battles are spoken of as his Māyā only.[25] Moreover metaphors are profusely used in the Purāṇas like the Vedas, the Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads, because this idea that gods like indirect, metaphorical and esoteric statements and hate direct or literal statements,[26] seems to have been fully imbibed by these texts.

Keeping all this in mind must we visit the Purāṇic atelier to see and appreciate the depictions and paintings of Indra and Varuṇa

INDRA IN THE PURĀṆAS

Indra is portrayed as a fair man riding on a white horse or an elephant and bearing the vajra or thunderbolt in his hand He receives adoration and is propitiated in the festival called Śakra-dhvajotthāna that is celebrated in his honour. He is the god of gods and is known by many names such as Gotrabhid, Vajrī, Puruhūta, Purandara, Maghavā, Marutvān, Vāsava, Divaspati, Śacīpati, Vṛtrahā Vṛṣā, Vṛdhaśravaḥ, Śakra, Meghavāhana, Ākhaṇḍala, Sahasrākṣa, Ṛbhukṣa and Śatakratu

The thunderbolt of Indra is made by Tvṣṭṛ from the bones of Dadhīci. According to the account of the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Kṛṣṇa advised the gods, who had approached him for help in their battle with Vṛtra, to go to the sage named Dadhīci and request him to give up his body which had become firm and impenetrable due to austere asceticism and divine knowledge. When the sage would give his body to them, they would get the best of weapons made by Viśvakarman When Dadhīci was duly approached by gods he gave his body and Viśvakarman made the vajra out of the bones of his body With that Vajra Indra became infused with great prowess[27]

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25. RV 10 54 2
26 Ait U 3 4, Ait. Br , 3.83 etc
Parokṣapriyāḥ iva hi devāḥ. Ityācakṣate parokṣeṇa parokṣapriyā iva hi devā bhavanti pratyakṣadviṣaḥ.
27. Bhāg , 6.10.1-14

Indra as a Lokapāla is described as flashing with lustre and endowed with great valour."[28] Indra is supposed to be having his city in Puṣkaradvīpa which is girt on all sides by the ocean of sweet waters In that island there is a huge lotus which has ten thousand golden petals like the burning flame of fire and this golden lotus has been known as the seat of Indra, the lotus-seated deity There is a huge mountain named Mānasottara which is like the boundary line of the eastern and western Varṣas, and which is ten thousand Yojanas in extent and height On the four sides of this Mānsottara mountain are located the four extensive cities of the four Lokapālas, i.e. Indra etc., and above that moves the car of the sun who journeys around Sumeru mountain and is moving for all the days and nights of the celestials.[29]

Amarāvatī the celestial city of Indra is beautifully described in the Purāṇas and it is said that only an imancipated man, who has discarded his body goes to that celestial city[31] This heavenly city of Indra is noted for the pleasure park Nandana and was adorned with a charming forest and gardens which were resonant with the music of birds and sweet notes of the intoxicated black bees; the branches of the graphic trees were bent down with the burden of fruits and flowers The celestial damsels engaged in water-sports presented a beautiful sight and the lotuses in the ponds were agitated by the swans, gooses, ducks, cranes, and other aquatic birds. It was girt on all sides with the etherial Ganges forming its ramparts as if, and with high walls on which were arranged all the fields of battle This was built by Viśvakarman. The doors were made of gold, gates of crystal and highways were all well arranged. It had planned sitting places, courtyards and byelanes. It had an Ayuta of chariots, and the crossings of the four streets

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28. Matsya, 266 19
Nyāsamantrānato vakṣye lokapālātmakāntha,
Indrastu sahasā dīptaḥ sarvadevādhipo mahān
Vajrahasto mahāsatvastasmai nityam namonamaḥ.
29 Bhāg., 5 20 29-30
30. Viṣṇu., 1 9 25
31. Vāyu, 77 30

were adorned with altars made of jewels. The ladies of that city were all youthful and had everlasting beauty and grace and were decked with raiments that shone like the flames of burning fire. The breeze fragrant with the scent of garlands that dropped down from the hairs of the celestial females filled the area The highways were frequented with celestial damsels and were filled with smokes perfumed with Aguru issuing out of the golden windows. The city was crowded with the topmost conveyances which were adorned with pearls and jewel-studded golden flags. It was resounding with the notes of peacocks, pigeons and black bees and the sweet songs of the wives of charioteers It reverberated with the symphony of Mṛdanga, conch, drum and Dundubhi as well as that of Vīnā, Muruja and flute set in time and in accompaniment with the music and dancing of the Gandharvas With its effulgence Amarāvati seemed to have vanquished the presiding deity of lustre.

The Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇa and the Matsya Purāṇa record that when it is midday here the sun rises at Samyamana [33]

This city of Indra was occupied by Bali for some time. Being advised by preceptor Bṛhaspati the gods assuming different forms left Amarāvatī and Virocana's son Bali started reigning in that city and brought the three worlds under his control [34]

There are many references to Indraloka in the Purāṇas Matsya Purāṇa, however, declares the attainment of the world of Indra as a result of many religious performances, observances and Puranic rites such as Gosahasrapradāna or Kalpapādamahādāna [35] According to the Vāyu Purāṇa Indraloka is ruled by Purandara who is the Lord of Śrī. Endowed with a thousand eyes and lustre, Indra is worshipped by high-souled sages and the gods. Indraloka is equal to sun in lustre

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32 Bhāg., 8.15.11-22

33. Brahmāṇḍa, 2.21.37, 3.13.36,30, Matsya, 124.27

34 Bhāg., 8.15 33

35. Matsya, 276.22; 277.28

and is resplendent with overall prosperity.[36] The house[37] and the assembly[38] of Indra (Indrasadas) is also mentioned.

Purānas tell us also about Indrāṇī, the wife of Indra besides whom she had her seat in the court[39] Indra got three sons Jayanta and two others from Indrāṇī.[40] Indrāṇī welcomed Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā to Amarāvatī when they came to Indraloka[41] She is called Śacī and Paulomī. Indrāṇī is the power of Indra, says the Purāṇa.[42]

In the Matsya Purāna a detailed account is given of the art of making images of different gods and goddesses.[43] There the description of the image of Indra along with Indrāṇī proves that the worship of the idol of Indra was prevalent at that time. Indra (Surarāja) is sketched as having one thousand eyes and seated on a maddened elephant. He is to be shown having large chest, thighs and face and shoulders like that of a lion, big arms, a crown and earings Further, he should be depicted as holding the thunderbolt and adorned with various ornaments and as being propitiated by the gods, the gandharvas and the nymphs Damsels, holding the chouries should be shown standing on the sides He should be seated on the throne, which is being worshipped by the Gandharvas On the left side, Indrāṇī with a lotus in hand should be depicted[44] Another image of the goddess is given She is styled similar to Indra with Vajra, śūla and gadā in hand She is to be seated on a seat made on the back of an elephant and possessed of many eyes Her complexion is of golden hue and she is decorated with divine ornaments.[45]

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36 Vāyu, 34.74-77
37 Matsya, 274.19, 278.13
38 Vāyu 2 29
39 Bhāg. 6 7 6
40 Bhāg., 6 13 7
41 Ibid., 10 59 38
42 Brahma 4 44.84.3
43 Matsya 260 The chapter is named 'Nānādevapratimāpramāṇa-varnanam
44 Ibid., 260 65 69
45 Ibid 261 31-32
Indrāṇīmindrasadṛsīm vajraśūlagadādharām.
Gajāsanagatām devīm locanairbahubhiryutām
Tām ca kāñcanavarṇābhām divyābharaṇabhūṣitām.

Fourteen Indras are mentioned in the Purāṇas. These fourteen Indras rule over the fourteen Manvantaras. Seven of these Manvantaras have passed and seven are to come Almost all the Purāṇas give a detailed account of these Manvantaras and their respective Indras.[46] In fact, this account has been so religiously furnished by all the Purāṇas that the details of these fourteen epochs have been reckoned as an essential characteristic of the Purāṇas The comparison of the accounts given by different Purānas shows difference regarding the names of one or two Manvantaras and their Indras. The name of each Manvantara is given according to the name of the Manu, the first human being from whom the creation in a particular Manvantara starts. They are Svāyambhuva, Svārociṣa, Uttama, Tāmasa, Raivata, Cākṣuṣa, Vaivasvata, Sāvarṇi, Dakṣāvarṇi, Brahmasāvarṇi, Dharmasāvarṇi, Rudrasāvarṇi, Devasāvarṇi and Indrasāvarṇi The lord of these Manvantaras are fourteen Indras named Yajña, Rocana, Satyajit, Triśikha, Vibhu, Mantradyumna (Mandra dyumna), Purandara, Mahābali, Adbhuta, Śambhu, Vaidhrta, Ṛtadhāma, Divaspati and Śuchi respectively. These names of the Manvantaras and their Indras given here are according to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa.

These fourteen Manvantaras are equal to one day of Brahmā At the close of each Manvantara, life of inferior creatures and lower worlds ends, leaving the substance of the universe entire and gods and sages unharmed. After the end of the fourteenth Manvantara or when Brahmā's day closes, occurs the great dissolution called *Naimittike Pratisarga* in which all things come to and end by fire and water, from which only the Prākṛta creation escapes including the three qualities and seven Ṛṣis etc. belonging to each Manvantara. At the end of Brahmā's night lasting for a *kalpa*, he awakes and begins his creation again. All the Prākṛta creation disappears only at the Prākṛta Pralaya, occurring at the end of the life of Brahmā, when not only all the gods and all other forms are annihilated

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46 Brahma. 2.6.6, 36.1-4, Matsya. 2.22, 9.2-36, Vāyu. 21.11.14.19 38 44, 57.33-6; 26-47. Viṣṇu., 1.3.18, Bhāg 2.11.24; 8 1.17-30, 8.5.2-10, 8 13.1-26; 8.14.1-11, Linga., 7.21-55.

but the elements are again merged into primary substance, besides which only spiritual being exists A human year is a day and night of the gods; 12,000 divine years or 4,320,000 human years constitute a Caturyuga or a Mahāyuga which is divided into four ages of progressive deterioration in the ratio of 4: 3: 2: 1, resepctively for Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali. Each of these Yugas is preceded and followed by Sandhyās containing a tenth of the period of the Yuga A 1000 caturyugas (1.000 4,320,000 human years) are equivalent to a day or night of Brahmā, which is called a Kalpa (aeon) Each kalpa comprisses the period of 14 Manus (fathers of mankind), each of whom presides over 71 Caturyugas with a surplus

Different views are held with regard to the Manvantaras According to Pargiter, the four-fold yuga division of time i.e., the Kṛta, Tretā, Dvāpara and Kali had a historical basis. Pusalker says that this chronological system of fitting in 71 four-age periods making a Manvantara in the cosmological scheme is purely hypothetical and a later elaboration [47]

From these accounts of fourteen Indras of the fourteen Manvantaras detailed in the different Purāṇas, some scholars have concluded that in the Purānic age, Indra indicated only a 'title' and these fourteen Indras are the historical personages, who have attained, and would be attaining the requisite position and title 'Indra' 'Manu' was the name of the human representative of Indra [48]

A S. Gupta considers the Yuga-Kalpa theory to be only a suitable device adopted by the Purāṇas for explaining the contradictions in the different accounts of the same event. The difference in the two accounts of the same event is explained by asserting that the difference is due to the difference of Yugas or Kalpas in which the event took place.[49]

Whatever may be the truth, one thing is certain that Indra's position in the Purāṇas was still as that of a king and when

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47 Pusalker, A D, 'Studies in the Epics and Purāṇas', Introduction.
48 Basu, Girindra Shekhara, Purāṇa Praveśa (in Bengali) p 37.
49 Gupta, A S. ' Problem of interpretation of Purāṇas'', Published in the 'Purāṇam' Vol. VI No 1, Jan. 1964, p. 65.

the Puranic authors imagined fourteen Manvantaras, Indra was the lord for all those fairy divisions of time, that covered the past, the present and the future. Indra is the lord of all the gods delineated as thirty-three crores in the Purāṇas. The Vāyu Purāṇa gives a nice explanation. The Indras of all the Manvantaras are endowed with similar qualities. They live in past, present and future and are the lords of the threefold time. They are all powerful. They, endowed with a thousand eyes, have Vajras in their hands and possess hundredfold powers and merits in collective form. Whoever are in the three world, endowed with velocity and strength are all sustained by these Indras through divine order These lords of all times are all-powerful on account of their lustre, 'tapas', intellect and strength [50]

These Indras are the Lokanāthas because they protect all the worlds in all the Manvantaras. Says the Vāyu Purāna that the root √*nāth* is known to mean protection by the knowers of the verbal forms. Since they protect the three worlds in past, present and future so they are called the Nāthas and Indras [51] These Indras are the chief as well as the partial deities The other small deities such as Yakṣas, Gandharvas, Rakṣasas, Piśācas, Uragas and Dānavas, who receive some portion of oblations of the sacrifices in the Manvantaras are only the glories of those Indras These Indras are the preceptors, protectors, kings and manes. These Lords of the gods protect all the beings through the principles of sustenance (dharma) [52]

The account given above shows that there had not occurred any conceptual change regarding Indra in the Purāṇas. Indra stands as a symbol of the supreme force working in the whole universe. The idea that was presented through a philosophical allegory in the Kenopaniṣad is described in the

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50. Vāyu , 64.6-9
51. Ibid , 64.19
    Nātha ityeṣadhāturvai dhātujñaiḥ pālane smṛtaḥ.
    Yasmād bhūtasya lokasya bhavyasya bhavatastadā.
    Lokatrayasya nāthāste tasmādindrā dvijaiḥ smṛtaḥ.
52. Ibid., 64.20-23

exaggerated style of the Purāṇas We are at once reminded of the words of Śrīkṛṣṇa in Gītā while reading the above description of Indra in the Vāyu Purāna.[53]

In the Purāṇas also Maruts are shown to be subordinate to Indra, but the image of their relationship has undergone a complexional change in the Purāṇic climate. Purāṇas give a very fascinating story of the birth of the Maruts.[54] It is being narrated briefly Diti, whose sons were all slain by Indra with whom had sided Viṣṇu, began to think of procuring a very powerful son who could humble the pride of arrogant Indra. To attain this end she duly propitiated and pleased her husband Kaśyapa, the mighty Prajāpati who became very much agitated on knowing her desire but ultimately granted her wish, the realization of which depended on the observance of a vow. Kaśyapa said to Diti, "thou shall not oppress, while in observing the vow, any being. You shall not curse any creature. You shall not utter any falsehood, nor shall you cut thy nails or hair, nor shall you touch any inauspicious thing or being You shall not bathe in water, nor indulge in anger, nor converse with the wicked. Thou shall not eat any food cooked by a Vṛṣalī ('sudra' by caste), polluted by ant or touched by a woman during her monthly course You shall not take the remnants of meals nor shall take any kind of flesh You shall drink water with your joined palms You shall not go out in the evening without having previously touched water or curbed your speech You shall not go out also with your body unclean or uncovered and bare of ornaments, or with your hair dishevelled You shall not lie down without having washed your feet, or with your feet wet, or with your head placed towards the North or the West, or with anybody else, or with your body nude, or during either of the twilights. Wearing washed garments, with your mind and body purified and

53 Gītā, 15.7

54 Bhāg., 6 18.37,54,56-77,
Matsya , 7.50-65, 69 60, 146.20, 28-44. 45-55.
Brahmāṇḍa , 3 5.55-79, 4.20.44.
Vāyu. 68.113-134.

cleansed, you shall worship, before taking the morning meal, cows, Vipras, Sri and Achyuta. You shall worship those women, whose husbands are alive, with garlands, perfumes and ornaments You shall also serve your husband having adored him, and also meditate on thy husband conceiving him to be within thy abdomen. If for a year, you can strictly observe this vow capable of offering offspring on people, you shall have a son who will destroy Indra."

The highminded Diti, having assented, was impregnated by Kaśyapa, and began to observe the vow in right earnestness. The sagacious Indra being apprised of the designs of her mother's sister, went to her hermitage and tried to please her by serving her in many ways Every day at the proper time, he presented her with flowers, fruits, roots, kuśa grass, sacrificial fuel, leaves, earth, water and sprouts gathered from the forest.

Disguised in the form of a deer, Indra waited upon Diti, with a view to find out any flaw in the observance of her vow. But with all his sharpness Indra could not find out a single mistake. But one evening as ill-luck would have it, Diti became unclean, and being fatigued on account of the severity of her religious observances of the vow, she fell asleep entirely forgetting either to touch water or to wash her feet therewith. Indra came to know of this lapse on the part of Diti and by means of his yogic power entered into the womb of Diti who was asleep. Then with his thunderbolt, Indra sundered the foetus in seven pieces and further subdivided them even in other pieces. When Indra was in that act of cutting them they cried out in agony and these parts of the foetus with folded hands said to Indra, "why do you torture us ? We are your brothers, Maruts by name."

"Never fear. You are all my brothers havidg the same nature with me. You shall be my own followers and called Maruts." And after pacifying Diti he took her along with the fortynine Maruts to heaven.[55]

According to the account given in the Matsya Purāṇa and

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55. Bhāg., 6.18.55-64.77

the Vāyu Purāṇa, Diti requests Indra to give to Maruts the rank of gods and that they should move among the gods.[56] At another place the Matsya Purāṇa says however, that Diti again thought to have a son who would kill Indra and she approached her husband with the desire. She practised penances for ten thousand years and got a son named Vajrānga As commanded by her mother he went to the heaven and having tied Indra with a noose brought him to his mother. But then Brahmā and Kaśyapa came there and requested him to release Indra. They opined that an insult is more than death At this Vajrānga released Indra from his fetters.[57]

Those who hold a historical view about the Purāṇas, opine that these fortynine Maruts denote the fortynine commanders in-chief of the army of Indra and that the army of Indra was divided into fortynine divisions Most probably the army of gods had only seven divisions and later on for the sake of more efficient work, Indra further divided each section into seven [58] Since the Ṛgvedic age Indra had been associated with Kṣatriya class and in the Brāhmaṇas, the anointing of Indra as a king is described at great length With this historical background, this division of one into fortynine Maruts can be interpreted as having an important political principle The governments have always been threatened by the force of the army If the commander is all powerful, he may cherish a desire to kill the king (Indra) and establish himself, but the wise king would immediately arrange the army into such divisions that such a thing might not be possible The desire of Diti is thus the desire of the army to enforce the military rule, but Indra, the king or the president adopted the best possible device to check the matter and divided the whole military-force into commandable divisions It should not be difficult to interpret this story even on macrocosmic, microcosmic or spiritual lines. Maruts indicate 'force' that is needed to be controlled by Indra.

Indra in the Purāṇa has not been exempted from his work

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56. Vāyu, 68.131-134 57 Matsya. 145 38-55
58. Basu, Girindra Shekhara 'Purāṇa Praveśa' (in Bengali).

of sending rains to the earth. He is the god of rain, who if displeased can harass the earth by Ativṛṣṭi or Anāvṛṣṭi (excess of rain or absence of rain). But Indra of the Purāṇas, like that of the Mahābhārata, is not all powerful when set in the whole mythical structure where one of the Tried is the supreme one and he is delineated as being subordinated by Kṛṣṇa or Viṣṇu in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas, by Śiva in the Śaiva Purāṇas and by Brahmā or Prajāpati in the Brahma Purāṇa etc. Indra had been an object of propitiation and worship among the pastoral people of Vraja, but Kṛṣṇa persuaded them to stop this worship. By this Indra was greatly enraged and as a revange he caused a deluge of rain to overwhelm them, but Kṛṣṇa lifted up the mountain Govardhana on his finger to shelter them and held it for seven days, till Indra was baffled and had to render homage to Kṛṣṇa. This account is given in details in the Vaiṣṇava Purāṇas. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa in a mode of offering eulogy to Śrīkṛṣṇa says, 'May that Lord of the kine be propitious unto us, who had humiliated the pride of Indra.'[59]

When Kṛṣṇa had held in his one finger the mountain Govardhana, and thereby protected the kingdom of Vraja from the heavy showers, Surabhi and Śakra came to him from heaven Being ashamed for having so disregardfully behaved towards Kṛṣṇa Indra touched both the feet of the Reverend One with his head Indra, the Lord of the three worlds with his pride humiliated, bowed to Kṛṣṇa with folded hands[60]

And then follows a long eulogical prayer of Kṛṣṇa, by Indra. Kṛṣṇa pleased by Indra's act of propitiation gives him a piece of advice as to how he should rule over the three worlds Lord Kṛṣṇa told Indra "O Indra, you had been verily intoxicated by your prosperity and pride, due to your sovereignty over the celestials. Being desirous of showing favour to you I had interrupted the celebration of the sacrifice held in your honour, so that you may always remember me. Blinded with arrogance begotten of prosperity persons cannot see me wielding sceptre of sway. Whomsoever I desire to show my power, I despoil him of his prosperity. Now, 0 Indra, return to

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59. Bhāg.. 16.26.25 60. Ibid., 10.27

your kingdom of heaven. May good betide you. Execute my commandments. Renouncing all pride and with propriety of manners, do you again establish yourself in your former sway "[61] Kṛṣṇa represents the Absolute Brahman and Indra can be interpreted as the Universal soul or the individual soul commanding the forces of nature or senses at the macro-comic or microcosmic level. The archetype or the mythical vision is the same as that of the allegory of the Kenopaniṣad.

In the last part of the story the Vedic Indra seems to gain ground again Surabhi, the celestial cow, expressed the view that Kṛṣṇa should be made the king, Indra on the earth to protect kine, Brāhmaṇas and gods. At this Indra performed the coronation of Kṛṣṇa. Thus inaugurating Govinda, the Lord of the kine and of the kingdom of Gokula, and with his permission, Indra went back to heaven surrounded by the celestials and others [62] The account of this event is also given in the Visnu Purāṇa and the details show that in reality Indra is in no controversy with Kṛṣṇa Indra says to Kṛṣna in the Viṣnu Purāṇa that he had sent the flooding rains only on account of the discontinuity of the sacrificial rites[63] and he installed Kṛṣṇa as king, then known as Upendra, the younger Indra [64]

The amity between the two gods is known from the account related with the demon Naraka Indra is shown as helpless and weak before Naraka who stole away Indra's umbrella and the earings of his mother Aditi and displaced Indra from the throne of celestial kingdom Indra informed Kṛṣṇa about these wicked deeds of Naraka Thereupon Kṛṣṇa went to the city of Naraka with his spouse Satyabhāmā and sundered the head of Naraka with his discus that was sharp as a razor. After that he arrived at the city of Indra and gave to Aditi her earrings [65] Indra received Kṛṣṇa and Satyabhāmā

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61 Bhāg 10 27. 15-17.
62. Ibid., 10 28 23
63. Viṣnu, 5 12 8
64 Ibid , 5 12 12
Sa tvām kṛṣṇābhiṣekṣyāmi gavām vākyapracoditaḥ /
Upendratve gavāmmdro govindastvam bhaviṣyasi //
65. Bhāg. 10.59

but Indrāṇī who was decorated with flowers of Kalpa tree, did not offer those flowers to Satyabhāmā, deeming her to be an inhabitant of the earth Thereupon Satyabhāmā asked Kṛṣna to take that tree to the earth and plant that in her garden. Kṛṣṇa agreed to do it and though warned by the guards of the garden, yet brought it carried by Garuḍa to the earth. Then Indra, goaded by Indrānī, aided by all the gods attacked Kṛṣṇa. Kubera, Varuṇa and others were defeated Garuḍa disabled Indra's elephant and Indra retreated At this Satyabhāmā made fun of Indra saying 'Do not run, lord of Indrāṇī'. Later, Indra apologised and praised Kṛṣṇa[66] At this Kṛṣṇa said that Indra was not in the wrong as he (Kṛṣṇa) took the offensive. Śrīkṛṣṇa addressed Indra. "O the Lord of the universe, you are Indra, the king of gods and we are mortal beings. It behoves you to pardon me for my misdeed I had brought this Pārijāta tree on the earth. You kindly take it to the worthy place You can take also the Vajra that was hurled by you Because that Vajra belongs to you "[67] At this Indra eulogised Krsna as the Supreme Lord who was incarnated on the earth to suppress bad people and protect the righteous ones Indra offered Pārijāta to Kṛṣṇa saying that it would remain on the earthly region till Śrīkṛṣna lived there[68] And thus the friendship between Indra and Kṛṣṇa continued. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa says however, that Kṛṣṇa stopped the performance of Indra-yajña to curb Indra's pride[69]

The legend of Indra's defeat at the hands of Arjuna in the battle that took place at the time of the burning of Khāṇḍava occurring in the Mahābhārata, is also narrated at length in the Purānas.[70] The encounter of Indra with Pṛthu is very fascina-

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66. Bhāg. 10.59 38-39
    Viṣnu, 5.37.16, 30.51-70, 31.1-10
    Viṣnu, 5.30
67. Viṣṇu, 5.31.1-4
68. Ibid, 31 7
    Niyatam pārijāto yam Kṛṣṇa Dvāravatīm purīm.
    Martyaloke tvayā tyakte nāyam san sthāsyate bhuvi.
69. Bhāg 10.24.12,31
70. Bhāg. 1 15.8, 10 58.25-27; 71.45-46, 89 34

ting. Pṛthu was presented with a crown by Indra himself.[71] But as he resolved to perform one hundred sacrifices, Indra could not tolerate the idea of Pṛthu's calebration of the great sacrifice, because the virtue of that would have made Pṛthu equal in merit with Indra himself.[72] So he decided to put obstacles to the said sacrifice. Thus when Prthu was worshipping Lord Viṣṇu while performing the last one of his one hundred sacrifices, Indra took the horse and disappeared. Then Pṛthu's son, urged by Atri pursued Indra and thereupon Indra disappeared leaving the horse behind him. The horse was tied at the sacrificial post with a golden chain. Then spreading darkness and in its cover the Lord Indra again took away the horse along with the golden chain that he could not break.[73] He was followed again by Prthu's son who in violent rage discharged a dreadful arrow at Indra and he in a disguised form again fled away leaving off the horse behind When Pṛthu was informed of this he became highly enraged and instantly taking up his tremendous bow aimed a terrible arrow at Indra. But the Ṛtviks prevented him and there on the spot the self-born Brahmā glorified Indra and revealed before Pṛthu and the Ṛtviks the true-self of Indra The description of Indra given here is beautiful and revealing regarding the contemporary religion and so is given below Says Brahmā

"All the divinities who are worshipped by sacrifice form the person of this one deity (Indra) whom you are desirous of slaying by this sacrifice Indra has the form of sacrifice and he is the incarnation of the Supreme One who is again the form of sacrifice So how can sacrifice be destroyed by sacrifice ? He is capable of putting obstacles to the sacrifice again. See, what a great revolution in religion has already been caused by Indra, with a view to putting obstacle to the sacrifice of king Pṛthu. Therefore, stop attempting at further sacrifice or let the king stop at the close of his ninety-ninth sacrifice, with

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71. Bhāg., 4 15.14 15
 Tasmai jahāra
 Indraḥ kirīṭmutkṛṣṭam . .
72. Ibid 4 12.1-2
73. Bhāg. 4.19 11,16-17

which he has already excelled Indra. (Then Pṛthu was addressed) No more sacrifices, since you are cognisant with the the virtues of final emancipation. Indra is identical with your self, and therefore it does not seem fit for you to be angry with him. Both Indra and you are portions of the Supreme One, hence, even both of you are the same in reality A person, performing an act that has been obstructed by destiny, naturally falls into the darkness of ignorance (in that he believes in his separate will and power beside the Supreme One), and feeling enraged at being obstructed loses peace of mind It is impossible to act against Indra. If you do not desist from celebrating the sacrifice in spite of the obstruction from Indra, then thereby, disregard will be shown towards all divinities. Already piety is being sullied by the illusory forms of Indra. Therefore do thou desist from celebrating the sacrifice. Virtue is being carried off stealthily away with the sacrificial horse to put obstacle to the celebration of the sacrifice O king, you are a portion of the Supreme One and you have been incarnated on the earth for protecting Dharma, which was about to disappear due to the impious deeds of your father Vena. Therefore, you have been created from the person of the Supreme One with a view to protect piety on the earth So you destroy the wicked ways of the followers of the false religion created through the illusory will of Indra Then a reconciliation was effected when Pṛthu embraced Indra who then stooped to touch the feet of the former and apologised for his wrong doing."[74]

It is very important to notice that a very significant discrimination is brought out regarding the concept of Indra and Māyā, which is called Aindrī (belonging to Indra). Indra is the pure consciousness and in an absolute way identical to the Supreme Entity, the Absolute One. To realize the final end, one must know the reality about Indra, that he is not different from one's own self (Pṛthu) as well as the Supreme One.

The philosophical nature of the above-mentioned myth has been widely recognised and scholars have attempted various

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74. Bhāg., 4.19.20-38

types of interpretations on divergent lines Ronald M. Huntington remarks, "One invariable trait of a living myth is its susceptibility to interpretation on many different levels. The present story, for example, may be meaningfully approached cosmologically as symbolizing the recreation of the world, in which case it forms a parallel to the most obvious elucidation of the ubiquitous flood legend Or it may be rendered sociologically as an allegorical representation of the "man of the hour", or in Toynbee's terminology, the "creative minority" meeting the challenge posed by a particular civilization in crisis Still another exegesis may be made from a psychological view point, and if the latter is the method followed here, it must not be construed as barring other equally valid renderings."[75] Huntington gives the psychological interpretation of this story and attempts on analysis of Indra as the ruler of the organs of sense in term of Jung's psychological types. C.G, Jung has distinguished four functions of the psyche—Sensation (establishes "the fact something is there"), thinking ("gives the interpretation of that which is perceived"), Feeling ("establishes the value of the object"), and Intuition (The immediate awareness of relationship) [76] Individuation from this view point may be defined as of the conscious integration and balancing of the activities of the four functions The strong outgoing emphasis on sensation, coupled with a secondary thinking function, relegates to the unconscious the feeling and intuitional function of feeling as Jung defines the terms, since moral judgements have to do with values, and the values are undeterminable by the use of thinking or sensation functions alone

'For his mastery over the organs of sense and action, therefore Indra must pay in the form of diminished moral sensitivity The amount of libido available in the human psyche

75. Huntington, Ronald M 'The legend of Pṛthu, A study in the Process of Individuation', published in 'Purāṇa' Vol. II. Nos. 1-2, July 1960

76 Referred to by Huntington C G Jung, "Psychological Factors Determining Human Behaviour (Cambridge, Mass Harvard University Press, 1936, pp. 60-61)

being limited, overdevelopment in one area inevitably produces underdevelopment in another. And insofar as Indra identifies totally with the masculine conscious functions, a conclusion suggested not only by his own activity but by the relative unimportance in mythology of his feminine counterpart (i.e his wife Indrāṇī) the unrecognized compensatory functions in the feminine unconscious must either be projected into the environment or, more characteristically, erupt in sudden irrational "outbursts". In short, Indra's apparent irrationality is due to the totally repressed unconscoius, the feminine side, for despite the fact that Indra symbolizes conscious mind power. he often acts impulsively, i.e without conscious forethought

Pṛthu can benefit from his fortuitous encounter with Indra for, as a potential victim of psychic inflation, he is desperately in need of exactly what Indra has to offer The extreme peril to the king at this stage is not the aroused hostility of Indra, but the life-strangling warmth and tender solicitude of the Great Mother Only a strong and extraverted assertion of conscious mind power in an endeavour to regain a firm hold on external reality can save him from the deceptively comfortable grip of the unconscious Although Prthu began by resenting Indra and foolishly challenging the god in just the area where the latter excelled, physical strength, he was persuaded by Brahmā to desist from such a fruitless undertaking which could only conclude in self-destruction At the same time Indra can learn from Pṛthu who, once he has renounced his animosity towards the god, represents a keener degree of consciousness based upon self-reflection Indra has never come to terms with his need for such circumspection, because he has seldom met an insuperable obstacle that would force him to hesitate and hence to turn his energies inward When the situation has arisen, he has been content to suffer some embarrassment or loss of face, but not to seek the deeper remedy which would make a recurrence impossible. In the final analysis, Pṛthu emerges superior in the precise areas of Indra's greatest weakness, morality and the humility that results from an awareness of One's own limitation and in recognition of this, Indra stooped to touch Pṛthu's feet in apology. The in-

complete final Aśvamedha stands as a mute but eloquent testimony to the human predicament To live as a created being is inevitably a limitation Man "Must in order to survive, always be mindful of his impotence" (Jung) And in order to be most truly man, he must consciously accept his conditional nature But it may be no distortion of the Puranic myth to suggest that the hundredth Aśvamedha was symbolically consummate when Pṛthu resigned his earthly existence for the realm of saccidananda. The interpretation of the Puranic myth on the lines of modern psychology is indeed very enterprising and such a presentation undoubtedly makes us feel identical with Vena, Pṛthu, Indra etc, the mythical characters and the story represents the inner strife of man.

P. N Sinha gives another explanation Pṛthu represents the first king energised by Viṣnu for the preservation of the universe But that king was not to exceed the proper bounds He was not to usurp the functions of Indra The Devās are the executive officers of the Rsis in the cycle administration of the universe and their work is more on cyclic than on individual lines The kings however as representing Manu have to deal directly with Monands and Egos aad have to guide them according to the light of the Ṛṣis Prthu was asked by Viṣnu to keep himself within the bounds of kingly duties.[77]

The legend of Pṛthu and Indra has its origin in the Atharvaveda[78], and occurs in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Vāyu Purāṇa and the Viṣṇu Purāṇa The Puranic legends have been explained in diverse ways and are open to many more revelations of the truth in future A myth is capable of producing many paramyths

Jealousy and pride of Indra is manifest in many other accounts of the Purāṇa Being very proud, he did not for a long time, pour showers of rain in the kingdom of Ṛṣabha, the son of Nābhi Ṛṣabha the lord of ascetism, by virtue of his powers of asceticism, made his own kingdom named Abja

77. Sinha, P N A study of the Bhāgavata Purāṇas or Esoteric Hinduism. p. 130
78. A.V., 8.10

flooded with showers of rain.[79] Later Indra, got him married with the celestial damsel named Jayantī.[80] During Hiraṇyakṣipu's absence at Mandara hill, Indra captured his queen and took her to his heavenly abode. Then at the intervention of Nārada he set her free But Purāṇa also states the reason why Indra captured Hiraṇyaksipu's wife named Kayādhu. Indra says to Nārada, "O thou divine sage! Within the womb of this lady is contained the vital fluid of high potency of Hiraṇyakśipu, the enemy of the gods. For this reason I should like to keep her confined under my sway until the time of her delivering a child, when with a view to secure the way of my own welfare I shall kill that issue and then let her go." But when Nārada told Indra that the foetus then existing in her womb was entirely free from any impiety, and was identical in greatness with the Endless One by virtue of his own qualities and possessing great might and was a devoted follower of the Almighty Lord, Indra let the lady go, who later gave birth to Prahlāda, a famous devotee

Indra took up his Vajra against Cyavana for allowing Aśvins to partake of Soma juice But Cyavana's austere penance tied down his arms and then Indra yielded before him [81] In the Aśvamedha sacrifice undertaken by Emperor Sagara, Indra stole away the sacrificial animal and left it near Kapila's hermitage; he also made the senses of the Sagara's sons enshrouded with illusion [82]

The Puranic Indra was constantly engaged in employing means to disturb the austere penances of the ascetics. Afraid of Nara's superior powers, he sent Cupid to spoil his austerities but was struck with fear on account of the great power of the sage Nara [83] He sent nymphs to disturb Mārkaṇḍeya's penance but in vain.[84] Moreover, it was Indra who sent Agni

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79. Bhāg , 5.4.3
80 Ibid.. 5.4.8
81 Ibid , 7.7.6-11
82 Ibid., P , 9.3.24-25
83. Ibid., 9.8.8-10 Quoted verse 8
    Aurvopadiṣṭayogena Harimātmānamīśvaram.
    Tasyotsṛṣṭam paśum yajñe jahārāśvam Purandaraḥ
84. Bhāg., 11.4.7-16

to disturb the enjoyments of Mahādeva and Umā when the latter cursed him to bear the foetus.[85] He disturbed Varāṅgī's penances in the disguises of a monkey, or a reptile etc.[86] Indra asked Gandharvas to take back Urvaśī staying with Purūravas [87]

Purāṇas are also full of references of Indra's becoming victim of the anger of sages and the preceptor of gods Indra, cursed by Durvāsā lost all his fortune [88] Durvāsā got a garland of flowers from a Vidyādharī and wearing it in his neck started moving on the earth. Then he saw Indra coming on his Airāvata along with the other gods ann threw his garland on Indra who immediately put it on the head of Airāvata But that intoxicated elephant dropped the garland on the earth, thereupon, Durvāsā became very furious and cursed Indra that he would be devoid of all fortune. Indra tried very hard to appease the angry sage but in vain Consequently Indra's kingdom, all the three worlds were deprived of all prosperity.

Similarly, once Indra was sitting along with Indrāni in his court surrounded by all gods In his pride he did not welcome his preceptor Bṛhaspati in the proper way The latter went away at once and concealed himself from the gods When the Asuras found the gods without their preceptor Bṛhaspati, they attacked the gods. Indra repented and on Brahmā's advice appointed Viśvarūpa as his preceptor. One day Indra discovered to his surprise that a portion of the offerings given to Viśvarūpa, went to the Asuras and became greatly enraged. In anger Indra cut off the head of Viśvarūpa The murder of Viśvarūpa brought him the sin of Brahmamicide. But after a

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85 Bhāg 12 8 14-31 Quoted below verse 14 & 15.
86 Brahma, 3 7 72 325, 10 23-26, 24 2,4.
87 Matsya P, 146 63-67
88 Bhāg, 9 14 16
89 Ibid, 8 5 h6
Also Viṣṇu, 1 9 1-24
Quoted Viṣṇu, 1 9 16
Maddattā bhavatā yasmātkṣiptā mālā mahītale,
Tasmātpraṇaṣṭalakṣmīkaṁ Trailokyaṁ te bhaviṣyati

year, in order to rid himself of it he divided his sin into four parts among (1) the earth that its dug portion should get filled up; (2) the waters that they would increase when mixed up, (3) the trees that their cut off branches would grow again and (4) women that they would ever cherish the passion of love.[90] This event described at great length in the Purāṇas is similar to that of the Mahābhārata in its contents and is likewise followed by Indra's encounter with Vṛtra [91]

In the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas, the status of Vṛtra is shown as very high; he is regarded a Brāhmaṇa of eminent virtue and austere penances and Indra had to suffer the consequences of Brahmanicide for killing him. The Skanda Purāṇa and the Bhāgavata Purāna have attempted to explain it and according to these Purāṇas Vṛtra was in his past life a great ascetic who was born as an Asura on account of being cursed by Pārvatī [92] The Bhāgavata Purāṇa gives a very long history of the previous life of Vṛtra He was emperor Citraketu, king of Śūrasena and had an enviable personality, great magnanimity of character, high lineage, vast learning, immense wealth, all round prosperity, great good fortune, charming youthfulness and all excellent qualities and accomplishments.[93]

Citraketu became the lord of Vidyādharas and with knowledge imparted to him by Aṅgira, Nārada and the Lord Śeṣa personally started to wander in the sky One day while travelling in the shining car presented to him by lord Viṣṇu Citarketu saw before him the Divine Lord Śiva surrounded by the ascetics, Siddhas and in the midst of the assembly of the ascetics and others in a posture of embracing within closed arms his wife, the Divine Goddess Bhavānī seated on his lap. At this, with a loud laugh Citraketu ridiculed Śiva and Pārvatī saying 'Like a low-minded shameless wight, he is presiding in the assembly with his wife on his lap, although he wears knotted hair on his head, and is renowned for his severe religious austerities and knowledge of Brahman.'[94]

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90 Bhāg 6.7 8 and 9(1-10).
91 Ibid , 6 10-13.
92. Skanda, 1.17 198-99
93. Bhāg. 6 14.15
94. Ibid., 6.17.8.

On hearing those words of Citraketu, the mighty god Śiva smiled gently and remained quiet, but the goddess Bhavānī cursed him to be degenerated into the wicked existence of the Asuras.[95]

The Purāṇa says that on account of his great spiritual prowess Citraketu could have also cursed the goddess in revenge, but he did not do it on account of his sublime nature[96] Thus cursed by the goddess Pārvatī he sprang as a Dānava out of the sacrificial Dakṣiṇāgni of Maharṣi Tvaṣṭā and was called Vṛtra who was gifted with a knowlede, direct and inferential.[97]

Thus the Purāṇa explains in details the history of the past life of Vṛtra and the cause of Vṛtra's birth in the Asura race. On account of the Hindu theory of re-birth and its principle of retaining the impressions of the past in the births to come, Vṛtra although born as Asura had the disposition like that of a Brāhmaṇa and is accepted so in the Purāṇas Therefore Indra was charged with the sin of Brahmanicide for killing Vṛtra. The Skanda Purāṇa states that Indra practised austere penances for a hundred years with a view to propitiate Śiva and get rid of the sin of Brahmanicide caused by killing Vṛtra [97] The other Purānas also give details of Indra's penance to attain the same end.

This myth also means that the world of the 'gods' is not to be viewed with the limited human eye and the pair of Pārvatī and Parameśvara stands for the cosmic unity of the Puruṣa and the Prakṛti; the person who cannot see this truth deserves a demonic world because in that case the immense learning and morality is merely a hypocracy.

The famous Devāsura war is recorded almost in all the Purāṇas [99] In this Indra was confronted with a host of

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95 Bhāg., 6 17.9, Ibid 6.17 15 96 Ibid, 6.17 36

97. Ibid, 6 17 37
Jajñe Tvaṣṭurdakṣiṇāgnau dānavīm yonimāśritaḥ,
Vṛtra ityabhivikhyāto jñānavijñānasaṁyutaḥ

98. Skanda, 3 19.3 6

99 Matsya, 22 60-61, 29 11 31.12
Bhāg, 8 10.24 and 28; 4-53, 11 1-40, 15.24-33.

demons such as Bali, Jambha, Namucī, Bala and Pāka. In all these encounters the Purāṇas first show the defeat of Indra at the hands of Asuras and his victory in the end with the help of either Viṣṇu or Śiva.

The demons though they churned the ocean in equal earnestness with the gods, could not obtain nectar, that was all partaken by the gods At this the Asuras, being stricken with jealousy, took up various arms and weapons and fell upon the celestials who started fighting in return. Thus arose a terrible encounter between the gods and Asuras. Bali was the commander of the army of Asuras. The king of celestials, Indra, was seated on Airāvata. Bali pierced Indra with ten arrows, his vehicle Airāvata with three, the four protectors with four arrows and with one the driver of the elephant but before those swift-coursing shafts fell down, Śakra smilingly sundered them all with his sharpened javelins Then Bali took up a Śakti which was burning like a huge fire brand in his hand and hurled it over Indra who cut that also into pieces. Bali then took up a mace, then a pāśa, then a Tomara and then a Ṛṣṭi, in this way whatever weapon he took up was cut into pieces by Indra

Thereupon disappearing instantly from view Bali spread his demonic illusion by which a huge mountain covered the celestial army, then fell down huge serpents and after that hundreds of she-demons, naked and holding maces in their hands, stood ready to cut gods into pieces. In the sky huge clouds began dreadful and deep mutterings and lightening driven by the wind began to shower fire. On account of these illusive powers of unperceived motion, the celestial army met with destruction. At that time Indra prayed Hari for help. Encouraged by Hari, the gods renewed war again and Bali was defeated. Then Jambha offered to fight with Indra and disabled his elephant. Mātali supplied another chariot to Indra and Jambha's head was cut off. Then Namuci, Vala and Pāka arrived at the battle-field and showered upon Indra sharp shafts in large numbers The light handed Vala simultaneously assailed with arrows the one thousand steeds of Indra. At the same time Pāka assailed with two arrows charioteer Mātali and the chariot of Indra. Then with fifteen gold feathered huge

arrows Namuci pierced Indra. Indra immediately sundered the heads of Vala and Pāka. At this Namuci discharged an iron mace at Indra who cut it into pieces Indra discharged his Vajra at Namuchi, but he proved too much for Indra's thunderbolt At this a voice from the sky told Indra that Namucī could not be crushed by a wet or dry thing. Then Indra cut off the head of Namucī with the seafoam, that is neither wet nor dry. Thereupon the sages garlanded Indra the king of celestials and began to chant his glories [100]

But later on, Bali who was defeated and deprived of his life by Indra, was revived by Śukrācārya Bali, then, performed the Viśvajit sacrifice Commanding his huge army, he proceeded to the prosperous city of Indra But he could not enter the city because, the impious, wicked, cruel, cunning, proud, lustful and avaricious cannot enter that celestial city of Indra.' [01] So Bali made encampments all over outside that city and then blew the conch conferred upon him by his preceptor and thus informed Indra of his arrival Indra was greatlv terrified and approached Bṛhaspati who advised himto renounce heaven and live in disguise till Bali met destruction that would be caused by insulting the Brāhmanas who had made him powerful Having been thus advised by their far-seeing preceotpr Bṛhaspati, the celstials assumed various different forms at will and disappeared renouncing heaven.

As the gods with Indra, thus disappeared from heaven Bali occupied the city of Indra and having performed one hundred horse sacrifices attained to the status of Indra.[102] Later, Hari having incarnated as a dwarf (Vāmana) took away all the three worlds from Bali, and conferred the three worlds upon his brother Indra Thus Śakra became the king of heaven again[103]

Indra's fight with Gayāsura and Nemi is detailed in the

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100 Bhāg P, 8 10 11

101. Ibid, 8 15 22

102. Ibid, 8 15

103. Ibid., 8.23.19

Evaṁ Balermahim rājan bhikṣitvā Hariḥ.

Dadau bkrātre Mahendrāya tridivam yat prairhṛtam.

Matsya purāṇa.[104] Indra clipped the wings of the mountains, that used to move from one place to another.[105]

In the Purāṇas along with the performance of sacrifice for Indra other ways of propitiating him have also become popular. The images and idols of Indra and Indrāṇī described in the Matsya Purāṇa have been referred to before. Indrayāga and Indravrata were also observed. The Indrayāga was performed every year by Nanda and other 'gopas' to please Indra, the lord of rains This was a traditional rite (pāramparyāgatam). Nanda told Kṛṣna about the Indrayāga when the latter enquired about it, "My child, the rain god Parjanya is Indra, who crowns the activity of people with success. The clouds are his favourite forms These pour down their life-giving and soothing contents in the shape of rains on the beings of this earth. O son, we as well as other men worship the ruler of the clouds with sacrifices performed with articles boiled in the water showered down by him Men eat the things left after the sacrifice is over; and so when they live they are able to attain to Trivarga. Whatsoever person avoids this religious observance coming down successively from the ancestors, out of fear, lust, envy or temptation, he never attains to prosperity[106]

Matsya Purāṇa refers to a vow known as Indravrata to be observed by the kings to attain prosperity in the kingdom, it suggests that a king should have the generosity of Indra.[107] The observance Indravrata is supposed to lead one to the region of Indra.[108]

Indra is a god, who is worshipped for vigour of organs.[109] Gifts of elephants and games are pleasing to Indra.[110]

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104. Matsya., 153 59
105 Brahma, 11 22 41, Matsya, 121 78
106 Bhag, 10 24 8-11
107 Matsya., 225.10
Vārṣikāmscaturo māsān yathendropyatha varṣati
Tathā'bhivarṣetsvam rājyam kāmamindravratam smṛtam
108 Ibid, 100.69
Ākāśaśāyī varṣāsu dhenumante payasvinīm
Śakraloke vasennityamindravratamidam smṛtam.
109 Bhāg, 2.3.2 Indramindriyakāmastu . . yajet.
110 Matsya, 47.114-122, 171-9; 266.62

There are many references to the favours bestowed by Indra on his devotees. Indra invested Vijitāśva with the power of moving about, unseen by others.[111] Indra even assumed the form of a bull over which Kakutstha rode and defeated Asuras in battle.[112] The account of grace and favour shown to Māndhātā, described in the Mahābhārata occurs in the Purāṇa as well. Strange is the account of the birth of Māndhātā from the right pelvic region of Yuvanāśava who had drunk the consecreted water from the sacrificial room. As the body cried Indra offered his index finger to the child for sucking. He was also named Trasadasyu by Indra [113] Indra awarded a golden chariot to Hariścandra after his Puruṣamedha.[114] Indra presented Sudharma and Pārijāta to Kṛṣṇa for his new city.[115] Indra is said to be a friend of Pururavas. He offered half his seat when the latter visited him.[116] Indra gave boons to Sukarman, a 'manvantara' lord.[117]

Thus we find various and manifold portraiture of Indra in the different Purāṇas Indra is the god of gods and at the same time as has been shown before, he takes help from Viṣṇu, Śiva or Brahmā, who represented the supreme one in the Purāṇic mythology. But at the same time we come across many passages where Indra is identified with these three. One such passage is given below:—

'Salutations to you. You are the unqualified, you are Brahmā, you are Śiva, you are Indra, you are Agni, Pavana, Varuṇa, Savitr and Yama. You are Vasus, Maruts, Sādhyas, and all the gods.'[118] In fact the diversity of gods can be perceived only in their descriptions. The oneness of the Divinity was originally sung in the Veda

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111. Matsya, 4 14 26, 15 15   112 Matsya, 96 12-15
113 Ibid, 9 6 31 also Viṣṇu 4 2 59 62
114 Bhāg., 7 7 17-20 23
115. Ibid, 10 50 55 also Viṣṇu 6.21 13-19
116 Matsya, 24 14 26
117. Brahma, 4.4 60, 5.31 5
118 Viṣṇu, 1 9 69-70
Namo namo'viśeṣastvam brahmā tvam pinākadhṛk,
Indrastvamagniḥ pavano varuṇaḥ savitā yamaḥ
Vásavo marutaḥ sādhyā viśve devagaṇāḥ bhavān.

'The wise seers through their words imagine Him who is only One, the Suparṇa, as many. The same unity in the midst of diversity can be perceived in the Purāṇas. The description of Viṣṇu in the Viṣṇu Purāṇa (1.8) echoes the same truth. One is convinced that through the divergent descriptions and manifold names the seer of the Purāṇa has attempted to give expression to his awareness of a power which is Nameless Infinite and Inexpressible and thus no god is different from the other god because all are identical and one with the Supreme, so Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī are not different from Indra and Indrāṇī.[120] The very fact that the other gods and goddesses are brought at par with Viṣṇu and Lakṣmī shows that the consciousness of One Entity celebrated by different names was present in the Purāṇas Leaving aside the mythical facts, philosophically no god in shown inferior to the other.

VARUNA IN THE PURĀNAS

The portrayal of Varuṇa in the Purāṇas is fascinating. Riding on a crocodile (Makara) furnished with a white umbrella moves the sovereign of waters with nooses in his hands on the Purāṇic soil Varuna is also called Pracetas, Amburāja, Jalapati, Keśa (lord of the waters), Uddhāma (the surrounder), Pāśabhṛta (the noose carrier), Viloma, Vāriloma (possessor of watery hair) and yādaḥpati (king of aquatic animals).

Varuṇa is born of Aditi and is one of the twelve Ādityas in the Purānas as well.[121] He is called a Lokapāla The Bhāgavata Purāṇa states that the palate of the Great Being (Puruṣa) was created and Varuṇa, the lokapāla, entered therein with his organ of taste by which the animated beings taste all juices.[122]

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119 RV 10 114.5
Suparṇaṁ viprāḥ kavayo vacobhiḥ.
Ekaṁ santam bahudhā kalpayanti.

120 Viṣṇu , 1 8 26
Lakṣmīsvarūpamindrāṇī devendro madhusūdanaḥ.

121 Bhāg , 6 6 38-39
Matsya , 6 3-5; 171.56

122 Bhāg , 3 6.13
Nirbhinnaṁ tālu Varuṇo lokapālo'viśaddhareḥ,
Jihvayāṁśena ca rasaṁ yayāsau pratipadyate,

Similarly in the Matsya Purāṇa, the formulae of installation regarding the Lokapālas is given, where Varuṇa is referred to after Indra, Yama and Nirṛti.[123]

'Makara' is mentioned as Varuna's riding animal.[124] The white umbrella came out from the ocean when it was churned by the gods and the demons. Varuṇa took that umbrella.[125]

The beautiful city of the wise Varuṇa is situated in the western direction of the mountain Meru on the top of Mānasa, the divine lake. It is named Sukhā in the Vāyu Purāna and Suṣā in the Matsya Purāṇa [126]

The Mānasottara mountain is supposed to be situated in the Puṣkara island and above that moves the car of the sun, who journeys around the Sumeru mountain and is moving for all the days and nights of the celestials.[127] When it is mid-night in Samyamana the sun sets in the city of Varuṇa.[128]

The name of the garden of Varuṇa is Ṛtumat, situated on the Trikūta mountain of beautiful scenic grandeur That garden of Varuna was the sporting ground of celestial demsels and was garnished everywhere with trees and plants bearing flowers and fruits at all seasons That garden of Varuna was adorned with various trees such as Mandāra, Pārijatas, Pāṭalas, Aśoka, Champaka, Mango, Priyāla, Panasa, āmrātakas, Gubakas, coconuts, date trees, pomegranets and so on. And in that garden was an extensive lake, resplendent with golden

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123. Matsya, 265 23
(Nyāsamantrānato vakṣye lokapālātmakāniha)
Varuṇo dhavalo Viṣṇu puruṣo nimnagādhipaḥ,
Pāśahasto mahābāhustasmai nityaṁ namo namaḥ.

124 Ibid 66 12
Nāgapāsadharo devah sākṣānmakaravāhanaḥ

125. Matsya, 251 4
Chhatram jagrāha Varunaḥ kuṇḍale ca śacīpatiḥ.

126 Ibid, 123.21
Pratīcyāntu punarmerormānasasya tu mūrddhani
Śuṣā nāma purī ramyā Varuṇasyāpi dhīmataḥ
Vāyu, 50 89
Sukhā nāma purī ramyā Varuṇasya ca dhīmataḥ

127 Bhāg, 5 20, 29-30

128 Matsya, 124
Ardharātram samyamane vāruṇyāmastameti ca.

lotuses, beautified with lilies, utpalas, and many other flowers. That lake was constantly resonant with ceaseless humming of intoxicated black bees and with the melodious notes of various birds, aquatic and others such as swans. ruddy geese, chakravākas and cranes, etc [129]

According to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa, Carṣaṇī is the name of Varuṇa's wife From her Varuṇa begot a son named Bhṛgu [130] The Viṣṇu Purāṇa however, like the Mahābhārata says that Gaurī is the wife of Varuṇa.[131] The foremost of sages, Vālmīki was said to have been born unto Carṣaṇi. The two Ṛṣis, Agastya and Vasiṣṭha are both said to be the sons of Mitra and Varuṇa [132]

Varuṇa is said to be having a hidden treasure.[133] According to the account of the Purāṇa, Varuna performed Rājasūya sacrifice, which serves as a standard of comparison for Yudhiṣṭhira's Rājasūya sacrifice as the Yajñakuṇḍas were made of gold in both the sacrifices [134] Varuna practised austerity at the hermitage named Badri [135] Varuna protected the Krauñcadvīpa according to the Bhāgavata Purāṇa which gives the following account of the Krauñca dvīpa. 'On the outer part of the Kuśadvīpa is the insular continent known as Krauñca, which is double the Kuśa island in extent The Krauñcadvīpa is encircled by the ocean of thick milk In this island there is a great mountain named Krauñca. Though this Krauñchadvīpa was being constantly assailed by Kārttikeya's weapons still

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129 Bhāg , 8 2 9-19

130 Ibid , 6 18.4
Charṣṇi Varuṇasya yasyāṁ jāto bhṛguḥ punaḥ

131 Viṣṇu , 1 8 28
Gaurī lakṣmīrmahābhāgā Keśavo Varuṇah svayam

132 Bhāga , 6 18 5
Vālmīkiśca mahāyogī valmīkādabhavat kila
Agastyaśca Vasiṣṭhaśca mitrāvarunayorṛṣī

133 Ibid , 4 22 59
Kubera iva kośāḍhyo guptārtho varuno yathā

134. Ibid , 10 74.13
Haimāḥ kilopakaraṇāh Varuṇasya yathā purā

135 Matsya , 201 23
Badaryāśramamāsādya tapastepu.

the mountain Krauñca was protected due to its having been constantly washed by the waters of the ocean of milk and being protected by Varuṇa, the lord of waters.[136]

Varuṇa is specifically mentioned as participating in the churning of the ocean described in the Purāṇas.[137] In the Devāsura battle Lokapāla Varuṇa along with Agni and Vāyu is portrayed as surrounding Indra,[138] and when the fight started Varuṇa fought with the weapon named Heti.[139]

Matsya Purāṇa sketches Varuṇa as the holder of a noose, standing in the midst of the army of the gods and waiting for the moment of fight like an ocean with furious banks.[140] In an encounter between gods and the demon Kālanemi all gods were rendered actionless. Varuṇa is described as deprived of all movement in that battle by Kālanemi and resembling a waterless cloud or an ocean deprived of water[141] In the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī described in the Matsya Purāṇa, Varuna, the propeller of joy to all the beings, was present holding all the sacred and pure ornaments studded with various jewels.[142]

In the battle between the gods and the demons described in the Matsya Purāna, when a demon named Kujambha approached the celestial army, Varuṇa speedily tied down his arms and tortured him with his mace.[143] Bali was also bound with Varuṇa's noose.[144]

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136 Bhāg, 5 20 18-19

137. Matsya 149 14

138 Bhāg, 8 10 26

139 Ibid, 8 10 28
Varuno hetināyuddhyan

140 Matsya, 174 15
Varunaḥ pāśadhṛṅmadhye devānīkasya taskivān,
Yuddhavelāmabhilaṣan bhinnavela ivārnavaḥ

141 Matsya, 177 49

142 Ibid, 154 487

143 Ibid, 150 127-129
Tasmin tadantare devo varuṇo apāṁ patirdrutam,
Pāśena dānavendrasya babandha ca bhujadvayam
Tato baddhabhujaṁ daityam viphalīkṛtapauruṣam
Tāḍayāmāsa gadayā dayāmutsṛjya pāśadhṛk

144 Bhāg, 5 24 23

Varuṇa was sent against Kṛṣṇa who had taken Pārijāta from Indra's palace but having been beaten by Garuḍa went back.[145]

Varuṇa is, thus, delineated as actively participating in all the battles that Indra fights. He is represented as fully equipped with his nooses and mace and endowed with the spirit of a great warrior. He is the presiding deity of all the lakes, riverlets, rivers, streams and oceans yet he has retained the moral aspect of his personality. He commands law and truth and punishes the offenders. Since king Hariścandra did not keep his words, so Varuṇa punished him by causing him the disease named Mahodara In the Purāṇa the code of religious laws has become highly complex and Varuṇa seems to be the ruler of all those complexities of religious behaviour For instance, he seized Nanda for taking bath at the so called demonic hour (Āsuri Velā) The Bhāgavata Purāṇa records that Nanda, having observed the fast on the eleventh day of the fortnight in the lunar month, and having worshipped Janārdana on the day following, entered the waters when even the earth was covered with the darkness of night. For that fault of his, a servant of Varuna seized hold of Nanda and brought him to Varuṇa.

But Varuṇa is not the supreme governor of law, he abides by the wish of a higer god represented by Śrīkṛṣṇa in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa; so continues the narration that on hearing that Nanda had thus been caught by Varuṇa, the cow-herds began to wail aloud saying, 'O Kṛṣṇa, O Balarāma.' Having heard that his father had been imprisoned by Varuṇa, the almighty lord Kṛṣṇa giving assurance of safety to his chosen people, went to Varuṇa. That guardian of the people, Varuṇa, seeing Kṛṣṇa approach, worshipped him with respectful homage and set Nanda free.[146]

Varuṇa, an Āditya and Lokapāla, receives adoration and is worshipped along with the other gods and goddesses of the Puranic pantheon He is prayed along with other gods for protection, "May Indra, Agni, Yama, Nirṛti, Varuṇa,

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145 Viṣṇu, 5 30 59

146. Bhāg, 10.28.1-8.

Pavana, Kubera and Śiva along with Brahmā and other lords of directions protect you."[147] A grahabali (an offering to a planetary deity) is given to Varuṇa in the rite known as Grahaśānti described in the Matsya Purāṇa.[148] One complete chapter of the Matsya Purāṇa (Cha. 289) is devoted to describing the Mahābhūtaghaṭamahādānavidhi, in which all the deities are protrayed to be seated on their respective vehicles Varuna sits on a golden seat placed on a Makara.[149] He is worshipped with Avabhṛthāgni [150]

Idol worship is an accepted and popular way of worshipping the deities in the Puranic religion. Matsya Purāṇa (Chap 260) gives a detailed description of the idols of the various deities. Varuṇa is described as possessed of a noose in his hand, having complexion like that of a conch and crystal, adorned in garlands and garments, seated on a crocodile, wearing a crown and a bracelet and having a peaceful disposition [151]

Further it is stated that an offering of pearls and oyster pearls should be made to Varuṇa[152] Varuṇa is also worshipped along with other deities before the commencement of a palace-building He is to be offered a lotus with a bundle of Kuśa-grass [153] This propitiation of the gods before the beginning of constructing a building is called Vāstūpaśamanam. Not only is Varuṇa worshipped along with the other gods but he is also propitiated singly King Hariścandra invoked Varuṇa for attaining a son Hariścandra was childless and

147 Matsya , 92 52
148 Ibid , 92.41
Uduttamam Varunamityapām mantraḥ prakīrtitaḥ
149 Ibid , 289
Varunaṁ cāsanagatam kāñcanaṁ makaropari.
150 Brahmāṇḍa, 2 12 33
151. Matsya., 260 17 18
Varuṇañca pravakṣyāmi pāśahastam mahābalam,
Śaṅkhasphaṭikavarṇābham sitahārāmbarāvṛtam.
Jhaṣāsanagatam śāntaṁ kirīṭāṅgadadhāriṇam
152. Ibid., 266.64
Varuṇaṁ pratimuktāni saśuktīni pradāpayet
153 Ibid , 266.16
Kuśastambena saṁyuktam tathā padmañca vāruṇam

Nārada advised the king to seek protection of Varuṇa by praying as follows :-'O the powerful deity, let a son be born unto me. O Emperor, if a powerful son be born unto me, I will perform yajña by sacrificing that son." Varuṇa having been thus propitiated granted the desired boon to Hariścandra and a son was born who was named Rohitasena. But the king did not perform the sacrifice that he had promised to Varuṇa. The God Varuṇa reminded him a number of times but Hariscandra evaded fulfilling his promise. Consequently, for deceiving Varuna, Hariścandra got the disease Mahodara (enlarging of belly). His son Rohita who had repaired to the forest came back with Śunaḥśepa, the son of Ajīgarta, whom he had purchased for sacrificing as a substitute of his own self Then Hariścandra worshipped Varuṇa and other gods at Yajña by sacrificing human being, and thereby got relieved of his disease [151] The account given above is an old one and found also in the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa In the Purāṇas, however, Varuna came to be recognised as a bestower of progeny. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa relates that Vaivasvata Manu was without any issue Then Vasistha made him to perform a sacrifice for Mitra and Varuṇa for the sake of progeny [155] As stated before Varuna symbolizes the cosmic or creative energy So in the Purānas, he is invoked for the sake of progeny.

In the Hayasīrsapañcarātra the method of worshipping Varuṇa with reference to the Jalāśayotsarga etc. is given After the construction of the pool at the time of Jalāśayotsarga, first of all, the idol of Varuṇa is to be installed. The idol has to be made by the jewels and Varuṇa is described with two arms, the right one assuring fearlessness and the left one holding the serpent-noose and surrounded by serpents, rivers, aquatic animals and the oceans Varuna is to be seated on the back of a swan. Then this idol of Varuṇa is to be properly installed.

After having installed the idol of Varuṇa one should meditate (dhyāna) on him and worship him with a prayer. The

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154 Bhāg., 9 7 7-23

155. Bhāg., 9,1.13

Aprajasya manoḥ purvaṁ vasiṣṭho bhagavān kila,
Mitrāvaruṇayoriṣṭim prajārthamakarot prabhuḥ.

Mantras given for prayer are quoted below.[156] These are called the 'dhyānamantras' (incantations for meditation).

The 'Varuṇamantroddhāra' is also cited below.[157] The 'Mantra' for the worship of Varuṇa is also given.[158] The 'Nibodha-mudrā' is depicted as hands folded into fists with the thumbs placed inside Varuṇa is to be saluted with the following Namaskāra Mantra, the prayer of salutation·

'We constantly bow down to Varuṇa who is the supreme being; who is pure; who is the lord of rivers and is endowed with large arms and a noose in his hand.'[159]

Varuṇa is also worshipped for the sake of rain. The Ṣaṭkarmmadīpikā gives the whole account of Varuṇa's worship for this purpose First it gives the Japanīyamantra (mantra to be muttered) Further it says that Varuṇa is to be propitiated through mental worship and 'japa' with the Mūla mantra that is also given below It is said if one utters this 'mantra' for a thousand times, the earth becomes rich with rain. One more mantra is given and muttering of it for thirty-two thousand times by a person standing in water and plunged upto navel, also brings abundant rain This muttering of

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156. Prasannavadanaṁ saumyaṁ himakundendusannibham,
Sarvābharṇasaṁyuktam sarvalakṣaṇalakṣitam
Kiraṇaiḥ śītalaiḥ saumyaiḥ prīṇayantamavasthitam.
Lavaṇayāmṛtadhārābhistarpayantamiva prajāḥ
Rājahaṁsasamārūḍham p[illegible]savyagrakaram śubham
Puṣkarādyairgaṇaiḥ sarvvaiḥ samantāt parivāritam
Gauryyā kāntyācānugatam nadībhiḥ parivāritam
Nāgairyādogaṇairyuktam brahmāṇamiva cāparam

157 Aṣṭaviṁsāntabījena caturdasasvareṇa ca,
Ardhendubinduyuktena pranavoddīpitena ca

158 Tena Ūṁ vauṁ

159 Pratimāyāṁ sthitim kṛtva praṇavena nibodhayet,
Pūjayedgandhapuṣpādyaih Sānnidhyaṁ pāśamudrayā
Sthitim pratiṣṭhām, Nibodhayet antargatānguṣṭhamuṣṭibhyām nibodhamudrāṁ darśayet
Namaskāramantrastu—
Varuno dhavalo jiṣṇuḥ puruṣo nimnagādhipaḥ,
Pāśahasto mahābāhustasmai nityaṁ namo namaḥ.

Varuṇa's prayer lasts till the fourth day.[160] Varuṇa is known for granting his worshippers their desired objects.

Varuṇa presented Pṛthu with a white umbrella that sprinkled water, when the latter was anointed as the king.[161] Varuṇa's gift of a thousand white horses had become a legendary event and it is not only repeatedly described in the Mahābhārata but is recorded in the Purāṇas as well. The Bhāgavata Purāṇa confirms the account given in the epic. Ṛcīka was a brāhmaṇa, who begged of Gādhi his daughter named Satyavatī in marriage. Gādhi considered that bridegroom unworthy of his daughter and asked Ṛcīka who belonged to the Bhṛgu race to produce one thousand horses each having dark blue ear at one side and with the effulgence of the moon. Ṛcīka went to Varuṇa who gave him what he desired. Thus Ṛcīka having presented those horses given by Varuṇa could marry Satyavatī, daughter of Gādhi.[162]

Varuṇa is said to have presented many white horses with black ears to Kṛṣṇa for his new city.[163] He gave Vāruṇī to Balarāma.[164] Varuṇa also presented Nāgapāśa to Kameśvara on his wedding.[165]

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160 Saṭkarmmadīpikā,
Vṛṣṭyartham asya japanīyamantrā yathā—
Puṣkarāvartakairmeghaiḥ plāvayantam vasundharām,
Vidyudgarjitasannaddhaṁ toyātmānam namāmyaham.
Yasya keśeṣu jīmūto nadyaḥ sarvvāṅgasandhiṣu
kukṣau samudrāścatvārastasmai toyātmane namaḥ
Iti dhyātvā mānasairupcārairvaruṇam ārā‹ hyamūlamantram japet. Prajāpatirṛṣistṛṣṭup chando varuno devatā etavadrāṣṭramabhivyāpya suvṛṣtyarthaṁ jape viniyogaḥ Mantrasya sahasrajapānartaram Iti suvṛṣṭimatī vasumatī bhavati Atra sandeho na kāryaḥ.
Mantrāntaram, Kūrccaṁ lakṣmīṁ tathā māyām tena 'huṁ śrīm hīṁ' iti Akṣaramantram nābhimātrajalamadhye praviśya yadi japati tadā anāvṛṣtim harati mahāvṛṣtir bhavati Aṣṭa-sahasrajapaḥ Saṁkhyā caturguṇā tena dvātriṁśat sahasrajapaḥ Dinatrayānantaraṁ caturthdine japasamāptiḥ
Nābhimātrajale sthitvā japenamantram prasannadhī.
Vasusahasram japenmantraṁ tridinaṁ vyāpya yatnataḥ.
Athavā –
Saṭsahasram japaennityaṁ tadā vṛṣṭirbhavet dhruvam

161 Bhāg., 4.16.14
162. Ibid., 9 15.5-7
163 Ibid., 10.50.56
164. Brahmāṇḍa., 4 15 20
165. Ibid., 4.20.29

Varuṇa is though delineated as an individual god adorned with appropriate epithets yet he is identified with Hari in the Bhāgavata Purāṇa that speaks of the latter as an Absolute Reality and in diction echoes the Gītā.[166] Thus we can sum up that though mythically the position of Indra and Varuṇa became insignificant with reference to the Purāṇic Triad, specially Viṣṇu, yet the philosophical concept that all the gods are the manifestations of the One Supreme is again and again presented. This Supreme is called by the epithets of Brahmā, Śiva and mainly Viṣṇu or Hari to qualify the Absolute, Obscure, Non-perceivable and All-pervading God. Viṣṇu, being the most famous, appropriated the charcteristics of Indra and so his feet are marked by dhvajā and vajra etc. and he has to double his hands to wear the additional weapons like bow and arrows, etc.,which, also, are inherited from Indra Sometimes instead of lotus he is found to hold a noose, a characteristic inherited from Varuṇa. Viṣṇu as the Sup.eme Being has eight protecting gods under him to protect this world Indra protects the east and Varuna protects the west.[167] This association of Indra and Varuṇa with the Supreme under the epithet Viṣṇu asserts that mythically Viṣṇu or the other two gods of the triad had gained prominence over Indra and Varuṇa in the Puranic pantheon yet they inherited many characteristics of the Vedic Indra and Varuṇa the two great figures of the mythology of the Veda and that philosophically they are in no way different from Indra or Varuna as all are manifestations of the One Supreme, who alone is eulogised under epithets such as Śiva, Sūrya and also as Indra and Varuṇa.[168]

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166 Bhāg., 11 16-17
Mām viddhyuddhava
Airāvatam gajendrāṇām yādasāṁ varuṇam prabhum
Gītā, 10 29
Anantaścāsmi nāgānām varuṇo yādasāmaham,
Pitṛnāmaryamā cāsmi yamaḥ samyamatāmaham
167 Bhāg., 12 11 70
168 Viṣṇu, I 9 69-70
Namo namo viśeṣastvam tvaṁ brahmā tvaṁ pinākadhṛk.
Indrastvamagniḥ pavano varuṇaḥ savitā yamah
Vasavo marutaḥ sadhyā viśve devagaṇāḥ bhavān

7

VEDIC EXEGESIS AND VARIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF INDRA AND VARUNA

The Vedic interpretation involves the recreating of the intuitive experience of the seeric poet. The poetry of the Veda is highly symbolic and its poetic language through its words and rhythms evokes a sense of mystry. The literal interpretation of a Vedic poem does not provide a satisfactory meaning. The meaning presented in a poetic symbol must be comprehended generally through intuition transcending the levels of ordinary comprehension. As the Vedic seers say about the understanding of the poetic speech that 'there is the man who sees but has not seen the poetic speech; there is the man who hears but has not heard her; but to another she reveals her lovely form like a loving wife, beautifully robed, to her husband[1] The human speech translating the mystic experience of the 'word' is at its best three steps removed from the original impact[2] The learned use the words in a concealed (symbolic) manner by which the divine visions (devās) become eternal.[3] The seeric vision is clothed in the poetic image and symbols. The relation between a concept, an image and symbol is recognised in the Veda as asks the poet 'Kāsīt Pramā (vision), pratimā (image) kiṁ Nidānam (symbol) The selection of the poetic words is compared to the winnowing of grain but the

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1 RV., 10 71 4
Uta tvaḥ paśyan na dadarśa vācamuta tvaḥ sṛṇvan na śṛṇotyenām.
Uto tvasmai tanvaṁ visasre jāyeva patya uśatī suvāsāḥ.

2 Ibid , 1 164 45
Guhā trīṇi nihitā neṅgayanti turīyaṁ vācomanuṣyā vadanti.

3. Ibid., 10 53 10
Vidvāṁsaḥ padā muhyāni kartan.
Yenā devāso amṛtatvamānuśuḥ.

winnowing of words is achieved by the sages through utter concentration of mind.[4] A symbol means originally 'a joining together' and consequently something once joined representing in itself when seen alone, the entire complex 'The term in literary criticism refers to that form of literary representation in which what is depicted means by virtue of its associative power something more or something else.' Thus a literary symbol links an image and a concept that is evoked by that image. The presentation of the conceptual abstracttion through a concrete form which can suggest that abstract idea is a symbolic act and a poetic function It is not based merely on resemblance as in metaphor or simile but on association of one sort or another The Vedic poetry arose from the seeric vision (Ṛṣidṛṣṭi) where any idea, character, action or event is conceived as an image that is characterized by a basic, general and universal pattern or principle called 'Satyadharma' (the basic truth) in Vedic language or an archetype in the terminology of modern literary criticism. These archetypes can be identified in various themes They are marked by a certain timelessness and pervasiveness in the sense that they are seen eternally operative at different levels of cosmic functioning and existence The laws, the basic principles that guide the entire flux of life at the microcosmic and macrocosmic, the individual and social, the physical and psychic and many other regions of existence are the 'devās', the fundamental truths perceived by the seers in their transcendental vision of the reality as a whole. The sage-poets realized also in the process the central force, the divine essence, that binds the cosmic forces together. Says R.V X. 129.5, 'the sages searching in their hearts with wisdom' found in non-existence the cord of existence ' It is the resolving of irresolutions or acting out tensions that confront a human being during his existence that again is to be understood symbolically since man lives at different levels of relationship with the world and his own self. The imagery of the Vedic hymns is such that it can be interpreted as referring

4. RV, 10 71.2
Saktumiva titauna punanto yatra dhīra manasā vācamakrata.

to the eternal truths working with respects of cosmic and individual life.

Moreover seeric vision aims at identification through integration. The Veda presents a unifying vision when it says that all the Devas are working in harmony; they are operating according to the concept of the one cosmic principle. Thus the 'devas' are the divine principles, the archetypes and the 'devatās' are the symbols to convey them. Indra, Mitra, Sūrya, Agni, Soma, Vāyu, Viṣṇu, Aśvinau, Savitṛ, Uṣā, Rātri, Ulūkhala mūsala and Yūpa, etc. are all poetic symbols of the eternal, all-pervasive and basic principles and are 'devatās' for being chosen by the Vedic seers to convey their poetic visions which could not be expressed through the ordinary use of words

On account of this archetypal symbology, the Vedic poetry and the Devatā can be understood at various levels of meaning.

As has been pointed out the Veda itself talks about the concealed (Guhya) or the symbolic meaning of the Vedic hymns and regards the mythical account of the actions of the 'devatās' as a presentation of a perspective or an archetypal situation For example, says the Veda that the battles between Indra and Vrtra that they relate are only imaginative and they represent the eternal and universal theme of conflict, struggle and tension and can be interpreted as natural, psychological, physiological, social, political, religious or a philosophical happening. In other words it symbolizes the archetype of contradictory dualism

The symbolic character of the Vedic poetry was recognized by the Brahmanic literature, which could be regarded as the first attempt at the interpretation of the Vedic mantra. The Gopatha Brāhmaṇa (1 2 10) speaks of the 'Rahasyam' (the mystic meaning) of the Veda. The knowledge of the symbology of poetic language is called the 'Nidāna Vidyā in the Brāhmanas.

The Brāhmaṇas mainly deal with Yajña, but Yajña is also symbolic as it represents the creative principle as conceived in the ritualistic action. According to the Brāhmaṇas, the Yajña as well as 'devatā' are both symbolic and so the Brahmanic texts are devoted to the discussion (Arthavāda) of the meaning of

the 'Mantra', the devatā as well as Yajña and its parts along with the proclamation of the laws of the perfomance of ritual (Vidhi). The Brāhmanas regard the Vedas as the personification of eternal truth.[5] The Ṛgveda and the Sāmaveda are called the eternal springs of knowledge.[6] One who is ignorant of the Veda does not know the Highest Reality.[7] Regarding the depth and vastness of the symbolic richness and suggestiveness, there is a legend in the Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa which relates that Bharadvāja practising celibacy spent three lives studying the Veda. When emaciated and old he was lying on his death-bed, Indra asked him what would he like to do if he was given the fourth life To this he replied that he would be studing Veda even in his next life. At this Indra showed him three big mountains and said that those were Vedas, endless in nature and that even if he spent another life, they would remain uninterpreted (Anantā vai Vedāḥ)[8] About the symbolic nature of 'Deva' in the 'Mantra' (Vedic hymnology) the Brāhmaṇas have stated repeatedly that the 'devas' are fond of the indirect or symbolic (parokṣapriyāh). We must remember that all the discussion about 'deva' and 'devatā, in the Brāhmaṇas is with reference to their use in the poetry of the Veda and subsequently in the Vedic ritual that is also symbolic. So the 'deva' of the Veda is not to be understood only in its physical sense but metaphysical (parokṣa) sense. 'The reference of the 'parokṣa' term is much wider than that of the 'Pratyakṣa' term; viz, in that of the many conceivable signs of or substitutes for the operating but unseen referent the Pratyakṣa term specifies only one.[9] The 'pratyakṣa' term stands for the 'parokṣa'. For instance says the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa (VII,) 4,1,8,), 'the lotus means the waters, this earth is a leaf thereof'. Here lotus and leaf being ritualistic symbols of waters and earth have metaphysical referents i.e. the 'possibility' and the 'ground'.

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5 S B, 9 5.1 18 'Ta'yatsatyaṁ trayī sā vidyā.'
6. T B. 1.4.4 9, Ṛksāma vai sārasvatavatsau
7. Ibid, 3 12 9.7 Nāvedavinmanuate tam brhantam
8. T B. 3 10.11 3-4
9. Anand. K Coomaraswamy, The transformation of Nature in Art. p. 3 4.

The Brāhmaṇas deal with the ritual (yajña) that is also symbolic; therefore all its components are also supposed to have indicative association. Says Ānand K. Koomarswami that the Vedic rituals are Mysterium and Mimus, Mysteries and Imitations; what anthropologists describe empirically (Pratyakṣeṇa) as "sympathetic magic" is a metaphysical operation, an enchantment and a conjuration, not a religious, devotional service or "prayer".[10] The Vedic poem as well as the Brāhmanic rite are both symbolic; they represent certain deep-rooted eternal principles and stand indirectly or symbolically (parokṣeṇa) as the 'pure Intelligences'. So whatever is presented in the Mantra and Brāhmaṇa (ritual) has an inwardly known aspect (antarjñeya rūpa) In the portions known as 'Arthavāda' (the speculations about the meaning) the Brāhmaṇas have tried to reveal the hidden and the concealed meanings of the Vedic myth and the Vedic ritual. Both myth and ritual have underlying them the truths regarding the inner nature of universe as well as human life The Vedic seers on account of the mytho-poeic vision are called 'Satyavācaḥ' and 'satyadharmānaḥ' the proclaimers of the eternal truths which conditioned the philosophical, religious, social, political and all other aspects of Indian culture The Brāhmaṇa literature in the process of interpreting the Vedic poetry and unfolding and revealing its archetypal symbols presented various approaches to its interpretation. It must be re-asserted that it is due to the archetypal element in the Vedic poetry that it can be understood at various levels of meaning. The Brāhmaṇas give the threefold meaning i.e the *ādhidaivata, ādhyātmika* and *ādhibhautika* as well as the *ādhiyājñika* meaning of the Vedic mythical symbols It states that 'a person who knows the Veda as such is a 'knower' (*vidvān*) in the real sense.[11] The ādhidaivata approach is the cosmological one. The ādhibhautika interpretation incorporates the various aspects of an individual's relationship with others in the family, the society or the political set-up etc. The ādhyātmika approach

10. Transformation of Nature in Art, p. 125.
11. T.U.B, 1 57.7-9

refers to an individual's physiological, intellectual and spiritual levels of existence. From the rhetorical point of view this would be termed as the symbolic action. Kenneth Burke[12] speaks of three levels of symbolic action: biological, familistic and abstract. The Brāhmana literature that is supposed to contain the first literary reaction to the Vedic poetry (apart from the Saṁhitās themselves) were aware of the magical power of the words and the symbolic and mythical vision of the profoundly evocative poetry of the Veda and say that the Vedas are endless (anantāḥ).

Along with the emphasis on multiple potency of the mythical or archetypal poetic symbol of the Veda, the Brāhmaṇas had introduced the method of tracing the word to its root as to unfold the radical metaphor Though the Vedic hymns themselves display an awareness of this aspect of the Vedic poetry and its language (i e Arcanti arkam Marutaḥ; Dātā maghāni maghavā surādhāh; stotṛbhyo maṁhate magham, kseti kṣitīḥ subhago nāma puṣyan etc), the Brāhmaṇas present very mature and rich derivations (Nirukti) of the words which undoubtedly help us to understand the mythical idiom of the Veda It was recognised that the mythical and the verbal thought are intermingled The intellectual link between language and myth is metaphor The mythical metaphor however needs to be distinguished from the rhetorical metaphor which stands for a conventional expression The real source of the mythical metaphor is to be found in the very construction of language The linguist mythists of the twentieth century are stressing this aspect of the relationship of language and mythology. Says E Cassirer that one fundamentnl motive has so far remained unnoticed which not only illustrates their relationship but offers an ultimate explanation of it. That myth and language are subject to the same or at least closely analogous laws of evolution can really be seen and understood only insofar as we can uncover the root from which both of them spring language and myth stand in an original and indissoluble co-relation with one another, from which

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12 The philosophy of literary form Studies in Symbolic Action, 1941.

they both emerge but gradually as independent elements. They are two diverse shoots from the same parent stem, the same impulse of symbolic formulation, springing from the same mental activity [13] The Brāhmaṇas describe the 'speech' and the 'mind' as a 'divine pair' (Vāk ca vai manaśca devānām mithunam).[14] The principle and method of interpretation by tracing the word to its root makes us understand the pulse and rhythm of the word—it takes us to the cognitive mental activity that was involved in 'naming'. The naming of the objects is indeed interpreting the reaction of the inner-consciousness to the stimulus. To go back to that stage of language formation one has to persue the course of language not in progress but in regress and 'etymology' (Nirukti) is a major way of doing that. When a word is traced to its origin it loses its rigidity. Thus the technique of 'Etymology' helps to reveal the metaphoric and mythical aspects of the word and specially the mythical word which has been employed in the mythic poetry of the Veda.

The Brāhmaṇas say repeatedly that the 'Devāḥ' love the indirect (metaphoric) way of expression and to reveal the metaphor they use the 'derivative' method. For instance, the Brāhmanas unfold the multiple significance of 'Indra' by deriving the word in various ways.

Indra is one who kindles everything, so it is an evolute of Indha and is derived from Indh 'to kindle'. So Indra is one who enkindles i.e. gives life, and this function of Indra is conceived at microcosmic as well as macrocosmic level.[15] At another place says the Brāhmana that Indra is the Puruṣa of the right eye; it is he who gives light to the pupil.[16]

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13 E. *Cassirer* 'The power of metaphor.' (*Excerts from Ernst* Cassirer, Language and Myth, translated by Suzanne K Langer, Dover Publications, 1946, pp 83-97, (First published in German in 1923) taken here from Mythology edited by P Maranda. p. 26.

14 Ait. B. 5.23

15 S B 6.1.2.2 'Sa yo'yam madhye prāṇaḥ eṣa evendrastānaiṣa prāṇān madhyata indriyeṇainddhata' tasmādindh Indho ha vai tamindra ityācakṣate parokṣam paro'kṣakāmāḥ hi devāḥ.' Nirukta gives the same derivation in Nir. 10.1.8.

16. Ibid., 14.6.11.2

The Upaniṣad repeats this derivation stressing the identity of Puruṣa principle and Indra.[17] Indra is also traced to 'Idamdra' (Idamdṛ) one who tears the horizon (sīmantam) of the universe. Indra refers to the 'sun', that breaks open the end of the dark sky to appear or it might symbolize the manifestation of Indra in the human body or the universe as the individual self or the universal self. He is one who shatters the veil of darkness or ignorance Further Indra is described as one 'who possesses power' (kaścanāsmin idamindriyam pratyasthāditi tadindrasyendratvam)[18] The Brāhmaṇa literature also traces Indra to Idam and dṛṣ[19] meaning thereby, 'the seer of all this,' the supremal witness of the whole world (external and internal) and thus becomes the symbol of the Jivātman and the Paramātman. This derivation is supported by the Aupamanyava school of Nairuktas[20] Moreover, while presenting all these derivations the Brāhmanic texts emphasise the symbolism of the poetic theme Indra is pure consciousness and symbolizes supreme knowledge as worded by the Brāhmanas 'Yat śuklam tadindram[21] and 'Indro jyotirjyotiḥ'[22] Phenomenally, he denotes the sun as stated at various places in the Brāhmanic texts[23] Indra is Brahma and is the supreme light (Tasmādāhendro Brahmeti Yat param bhā prajāpatirvā sa Indro vā) Indra in the Brāhmanas is identified with speech (symbolic of knowledge or cognitive consciousness), vital energy (prāṇa), mind (Manas and hṛdaya) and strength (vīryam and balam) etc and thus Indra symbolizes the all-enveloping and omniscient conscious principle in the entire cosmic existence

Brāhmaṇas unfold the significance of other mythical symbols related with Indra such as Śacī, Prasahā, Senā (wives of Indra), Vṛtra, Namuci and Vajra etc In the ritualistic domain Indra is called the soul of the Yajña and the symbol of

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17. Br UP, 4 2 2
18 T B 2 2 10 63, 1 7.6 6, S B 1 8.1.42
19. T B 2,2 10 63
20 Nir, 10 1 8.
21 Ś B. 12 9 1 12
22. Kau. B 14 1
23 Refer to Chap II, p. 61

the supreme divinty of the ritual (Indra Yajñasyātmendo devatā) and the Yajña belongs to Indra (Aindro Yajñaḥ).[24] Yajña again is symbolic of the whole creation on macrocosmic level, internal harmonious activity at the microcosomic level and co-ordinated participation by different constituents of a society in an undertaking for the good of all at the social level. Indra is the lord of the Yājñika activity.

Moreover mainly in the Brāhmaṇas and scarcely in the Upaniṣads, the delineation of Vedic poetic symbols (devatās) is allegorical. The Brāhmaṇas have ritualistic allegories which constantly refer to parallel structure of ideas, whether normal, philosophical, social or political or the natural phenomena. Many such allegorical stories related to Indra and Varuṇa occur in the Brāhmaṇas In the Śat B. a story relates the birth of Indra from the union of Yajña and Vāk which might be understood to mean the manifestation of Indra in the union of harmonious action and knowledge Indra entered the womb of Vāk, so that a monster might not be born means that the Vāk (knowledge) shattering the limiting sheathes became characterized by a total perspective i.e. the awareness of the cause and a witness (sākṣi) of all existence. Unless this happens there is a danger of great destruction (big monster) resulting out of a limited and egoistic look-out and activity. The Indra-Vṛtra fight occurring in the Vedic hymns develops into various allegorical accounts in all the Brāhmaṇas[25] which also unfold the symbolic names of the allegorical characters. The statement that 'Vṛtra is covering all this, so his name is Vṛtra' alludes to Māyā, whose nature is to conceal the reality or an enemy who hides away all our treasures or the clouds who imprison the aerial waters and so on. The Brāhmaṇas here seem to have embarked on the fact that there is no end to the meanings of the symbolic names of the Vedic poetry that can take us to different vistas in accordance to our sensibility or knowing consciousness.

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24 For reference See Chap, II, p 78

25. Chapter II pp 72-73

Namuci represents sin, evil or malignity.[26] Vajra is explained as the primeval waters (vajro va āpaḥ)[27], which are specified as creative vigour.[28] These allegorical stories of the Brāhmaṇas are ritualistic or philosophical in nature and serve as the outlines for the endless variety of mythical stories that are found in the extensive Purānic literature

Thus Indra, according to the Brāhmanas is the soul of the Yajña, the whole cosmic activity and the super term 'Udgītha' is used for him (Sa eṣa Indra Udgītha, T.U.B , 1. 45, 4). 'He who knows thus knows the Udgītha with regard to both, the divinities (manifested forces) and the Self and becomes free from all sin and falsehood' The ritualistic worship symbolizing the entire phenomenal and individual activity leads to pleasures ranging from the gross physical objects on earth and in heaven to the experience of communion with Brahma or Hiranyagarbha that symolizes the highest manifestation of the absolute in the phenomenal universe and the Brāhmanas have named it Indra. Since the manifest is philosophically identified with the Absolute, so Indra's oneness with the Supreme Absolute Entity is emphasized in theUpaniṣads.

In the same style, the Brāhmaṇas delineate Varuna [29] Etymologically he is the enveloper and is identified with the cosmic waters, the primeval matter [30] All the movement belongs to Varuṇa and he is also identified with time (Saṁvatsara Varuna). The Kausītaki Br states that Śri [the symbol of prosperity and beauty) is Varuna (Śri Vai Varunaḥ). According to the Aitareya and the Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa the blazing fire (the manifest energy) is Varuna.[31] The night belongs to Varuṇa (Vāruni Rātrī) Varuṇa is Rātri (Rātrī Varuṇaḥ) and the black colour belongs to Varuṇa in contrast to Indra who symbolizes all that is bright. That Varuna represents the material aspect of the complimentary creative dualism was recognised by the Brāhmanas which contain such statements as 'Varuṇa is the womb and the seed is Indra[32] or Intelligence indeed is

26 Chapter II. p 74
27. Ś.B. 1.1.1 17
28. Ibid . 3.3.4.1
29 Chapter II, p 185 to 216
30 Go. B 1.1.7
31 Ś B 2 3 2.10, Ait. B. 3 4; 6.26
32 Ś.B. 12 9 1,17

Mitra and the will is Varuṇa.[33] Varuṇa thus represents the cosmogonical material cause developed later in the philosophical systems as Prakṛti and Māyā. The snares (Pāśa) and ropes (Rajju) of Varuṇa are described at length and we know that philosophically the world itself is considered to be a snare that entangles the self in the non-reality and illusion. Varuṇa is also the ordainer of law (Ṛta) *may it be cosmic, moral or social*.

The Brāhmaṇas thus reveal the archetypal character of the mythical symbols of the Vedic poetry by projecting the parallel ritualistic symbols or by unfolding the radical metaphor through the etymological method or through the allegorical technique or sometimes through speculative dialogues and discussions of philosophical nature, which are continued in the Āranyakas and the Upaniṣads also, though here all discussions lead to the Self in their final analysis.[34] The Upaniṣads interpret the intuitive vision of the Vedic seers with reference to the 'I' with regard to its various aspects i e. physical, vital, mental, psychic and spiritual (Tait. U. III 2 6) The unity of cosmic and psychic nature delineated in the famous allegory of the Kenopaniṣad where the gods are presented as psychological and the cosmic powers who win their victories over demons in their respective spheres not due to their own inherent power but the Ātman. Indra is the individual self as well as the universal self and Yakṣa (Brahman) is not different from Indra; As soon as 'Pure I' devoid of its branching of personality is intuitively fixed up, the duality is no more perceived and Umā Haimavatī, the absolute pure knowledge is realized by Indra or by the Self within Itself The Deva-vidyā must culminate in the Brahmavidyā.

After this we enter the age of the Vedāṅgas, a class of literature auxiliary to the proper understanding of the Vedas. Originally the Vedāṅgas meant the subjects of instruction in a Vedic School and aimed at preserving the 'form' as well as the 'inner substance' of the Vedas. Though all the Vedāṅgas help

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33. Ś.B., 4.1.4.1
34. Refer to Chapter III & IV

to understand the various aspects of the divine 'Vāk', the Nirukta of Yāska has made an outstanding contribution towards laying down a firm foundation for the interpretative tradition. The technique of tracing the word to the corresponding verbal root as to reach the radical metaphor had been already established as the Brāhmanas, the Āraṇyakas and the Upaniṣads give derivations of more than 600 words of the Veda. Yāska quotes profusely from the Brāhmanic literature and has referred to the school of Nairuktas and some Niruktakāras by name. Nirukta is a commentary on Nighaṇṭu, a compilation of words occurring in the Vedas. Though most of the words are used in the common language, those words have a special meaning. Those are 'Naighaṇṭavas' (ni-gamanāt), picked up from the Vedic poetry and collected Yāska emphasizes this aspect when he says, 'former Ṛṣis had direct intuitive insight into dharma and brahma (Veda) that made itself manifest to them They handed down by oral tradition the hymns to later generations who were destitute of the direct intuitive insight. The later generation declining even in the powers of preserving the tradition orally compiled the work (Nighaṇṭu) in order to know the meaning.[35] According to Yāska, the words simply learnt by rote, but not understood will not enlighten when uttered, just as fuel be it dry, will not blaze unless it comes in contact with fire.[36] He is definitely referring to the highly symbolic aspect of Vedic poetry unlimited in the vastness of its meaning. 'Speech without meaning is a barren cow, a mere delusion (Adhenu) an external symbol unfit to grant the object of desire. The meaning is fruit and flower of speech (Arthaṁ vācaḥ puṣpaphalam)'.[37] He refutes the postulate that Vedic words uttered without comprehension of their meaning could yield the result and retorted those who propagated the view that the Vedas were meaningless by saying that it is not the fault of a post if a blindman does not see it. Nirukta, the science of etymology, he pointed out, was complimentary to grammar which indicates that the etymology helps

35. Nir., 1.20
36 Ibid., 1,8
37. Ibid., 1.20

to reveal the inner and the symbolic meaning of the poetic words after the ordinary meaning has been understood. The 'derivative process' however must be guided by the meaning (Arthanityaḥ parīkṣet) Yāska has emphasized the value of tradition (pārovarya), knowledge of many sciences, penetrating thinking, deep contemplation and concentration for the understanding of the truth of Veda.[38] Yāska illustrates the Ādhidaivika, and the Ādhyātmika interpretations of the Vedic verses in chapters 13 and 14 of the Nirukta. Ātmānanda, who has commented upon the 'Asya vāmasya' hymn remarks that Nirukta has a metaphysical approach to the Veda (Niruktamadhidaivatavişayam).

Yāska has given the following derivations of the word Indra, i e Indra divides food (Irā√dṛ) or he bestows food Irā√ dā) or he possesses food (Irā√dhā), or he pierces food (Irā√dṛ) or he illuminates the being (Indhe bhūtāni). Then he quotes from the Brāhmaṇa the derivation that Indra is one who gives life to all beings and says that according to Āgrāyaṇa he is Indra because he has accomplished all this (Idankaraṇāt). Yāska also quotes the view of Aupamanyava that he is Indra because he sees everything (Idaṁdarśanāt). In connection with these derivations it may be noted that Indra as the giver of life, food and sustenance becomes the champion, the ruler and the saviour of people and Yāska derives the word Indra from √idi and √dru or √dṛ in causal which means being powerful he sends away or tears the enemies asunder (Indraḥ śatrūn dārayitā vā drāvayitā vā) and as a king he honours those people who are sacrificers (Ādarayitā ca yajvatām)[39] The main work of Indra is twofold i.e giving of waters and the killing of Vṛtra (Athāsya karma rasānupradānaṁ vṛtravadhaḥ)[40] But then who is this Vṛtra? Yāska gives the views of etymologists and the legendarians that he is a cloud or a demon, son of Tvaṣṭṛ respectively and adds that the cloud is produced by the comingling of water and lightning and when like a serpent

38. Nir., 13.11
39 Ibid., 10.8
40. Ibid., 7 10

cloud expanded his body and blocked the channels or the rivers, Indra killed him and water flowed forth.[41] He quotes from the Ṛgveda to illustrate this aspect of Indra and explains it. In spite of giving various etymologies, Yāska has no where clearly expounded the nature of Indra as he explicitly does in case of Vṛtra terming him as cloud Although he alludes to some images of Indra, where he is depicted as the destroyer of clouds and is distinctly the sun god whose bow is most powerful, strongly made and well-shaped, whose arrow is golden and swift and whose arms knock down enemies and increase sweetness for us and are well-equipped and fit for war. Golden and swift arrows symbolise the rays of the sun[42] There is another inference in the fourth chapter[43] by which it can be deduced that for Yāska Indra symbolises the power of sun. In the 13th chapter Yāska presents Indra as the supreme soul and on the microcosmic level Yāska interprets Indra as the great soul and this personifies the most important part of the cosmo-physico body of the individual. It is only at stray places that Yāska gives the microcosmic interpratation. To Yāska the soul symbolises the lord or the guardian of all senses in the human body Moreover, Yāska points out the anthropomorphic and unanthropomorphic appearance of the celestials and as anthropomorphic gods they have a socialistic reference and are symbolic of certain social values Indra stands there as a forceful king with immense powers and as dispeller of all disruptive, destructive and evil forces

The first most laudable work in the field of the Vedic studies is the commentary of Sāyanācārya on major part of the Vedas and a large number of Brāhmanas. He is influenced greatly by Yāska, the Brāhmaṇas as well as the legendary literature. He being a Mīmāṁsaka has a ritualistic approach to the Vedic hymns and before commenting on any hymn supplies, on the authority of the Kalpa-Sūtras the ritualistic stage where all the gods are invoked to come and partake in the Yajña. The metaphorical meaning of Yajña

41. Nir., 2 17
42 Ibid , 6.34
43. Ibid 4.1

has been explained by Sāyaṇa at many places For instance, says he commenting upon the Puruṣa Sūkta that the Yajña referred to here is the Sāṅkalpika (metaphorical) one He re-asserts the ādhyātmika or philosophical tradition of Vedic interpretation at some places and gives very significant clues to the understanding of the philosophical thought of many Vedic hymns As is true with the entire post-Śankara literary tradition, Sāyaṇācārya also seems to be influenced by the Advaita Vedānta of Śankara is clear from his commentary on Puruṣa Śukta, Vāk Sūkta etc Sometimes he offers psychological renderings of some mythical concepts but the major portion of his commentary however, does not bring out the deeper meaning, the divine beauty and the poetic joy of the Vedic hymns but one cannot forget the enormous work that he had undertaken and his is the first co ordinated, consistent, largly planned and gracefully written commentary in the traditional Indian form Sāyaṇa also elaborated the naturalistic (ādhidaivika) interpretation that was followed by the Nairuktas. Says Aurbindo regarding this, "we have here the seeds of that naturalistic theory of the Veda to which European learning has given so wide an extension The old Indian scholars did not use the same freedom or the same systematic minuteness in their speculation. Still this element in Sāyaṇa's ommentary is the true parent of the European Science of Comparative Mythology.[44]

For Sāyaṇa Indra stands for sun or the god of rains and Vṛtra is the physical cloud-demon who holds back the waters and is pierced by Indra In the same way Varuṇa symbolizing the night keeps watch over the bad elements and punishes them Besides the naturalistic and ritualistic interpretations, he interpreted the Vedic Indra on spiritual lines representing Jivātman and Paramātman

At the very outset of his commentary Sāyaṇa makes himself clear about these two modes of interpretation of the Vedic mythical symbols i.e. the naturalistic and the spiritual interpretation where gods stand for cosmic power as well as for

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44 Aurbindo, On the Veda, p. 22

Parmātman and Jīvātman. According to him One Supreme Iśvara alone is invoked as many gods[45] He quotes, explains and accepts the derivations given in Nirukta[46] and the Bṛhadāraṇyakopaniṣad.[47] On the basis of these derivations Sāyaṇa interprets Indra as a god of rain who shatters clouds for water and gives us rain for the production of food, as a blissful god who enjoys Soma, who as Sūrya, infuses life and as Ātman in its twofold aspects—Jīvātman and Parmātman—illumines the microcosm as well as the macrocosm[48]

Further, he adds that the aspirers of the spirit meditating on the Paramātman realise Him as the Illuminating Light, so he is named as Indra. On this point Indra is to be derived from the root √'Idh' meaning to illumine. He again refers to the sage Āgrāyaṇa who derives Indra as Idaṁkarṇādindra, because Indra in the form the Supreme Soul creates this world. Sāyaṇa gives the view of Sage Aupamanyava who derives it as 'Idamdarśanādindra', that is, Indra is to be realized as the Non-different Entity and is to be known in a subjective way through the highest knowledge[49] To support this statement Sāyaṇa

45 Yadyapīndrādayastatra hūyante tathāpi parameśvarasyeva Indrādirūpeṇāvasthānādavirodhaḥ From Upodghātaprakaraṇam of Ṛgvedasaṁhitābhāṣya by Sāyaṇācārya.

46 Nir, 10 8 47. Bṛ U, 4 2 2

48 Sāyana on R V I. 3,4
Asyāyamarthaḥ 'Dṛ vidāraṇe' iti dhātuḥ. Irāmantramuddiśya tanniṣpādakajalasiddhayartham dṛaṇāti meghaṁ vidīrṇaṁ karotītīndraḥ. 'Dudāñ dāne' iti dhātuḥ. Irāmannaṁ vṛṣṭiniṣpādanena dadātītīndrah 'Dhāñ poṣaṇārthaḥ'. Irāmannam tṛptikāraṇam sasyam dadhāti jalapradānena puṣṇātītīndraḥ. Irāmutpādayitum karṣakamukhena bhūmiṁ vidārayatītīndrah Pūrvoktapoṣaṇamukhenerāṁ dhārayati vināśarāhityena sthāpayatītīndraḥ Induḥ-Somo vallirasaḥ Tadartham yāgabhūmau dravati dhāvatītīndraḥ Indau yathokte some ramate krīḍatītīndraḥ 'Ñi indhī dīptau' iti dhātuḥ Bhūtāni prāṇidehān indhe jīvacaitanyarūpeṇāntaḥ praviśya dīpayatītīndraḥ

49. Sāyaṇa. Yadyasmāt kāraṇādenaṁ paramātmarūpamindram devam prāṇaiḥ vākcakṣurādīndriyaiḥ prāṇāpānadivāyubhiśca sahitaṁ samaindhat upāsakā dhyānena samyak prakāśitavantaḥ, tat tasmāt kāraṇāt Indranāma sampannam. Asmin pakṣe idhyate dīpyate iti karmaṇi vyutpattiḥ Āgrāyaṇanāmako muniḥ 'Idam karaṇādindra'iti nirvacanam manyate Indro hi paramātmarūpeṇedaṁ jagatkaroti Aupamanyavanāmako muniridaṁ darśanādindra iti nirvacanamāha . .

cites a passage from the Aitareyāraṇyaka.[50] Further, he refers to the root 'Idi Paramaiśvarye' to derive the word Indra to mean the Highest Lord because He creates the world through his Māyā or Power, and he gives a verse from the Ṛgveda to support this explanation.[51] He gives another derivation of Indra from the word 'Ina' meaning the Supreme soul, joined with roots√dṛ' indicating fear and '√dru' meaning movement and 'ā+√dṛ' indicating respect. So Indra is the Supreme Soul who causes fear to the enemies, who makes the enemies to run away and who is considerate to his devotees.[52] These are the derivations of the word Indra given by Sāyaṇa which clearly betray Indra as the symbol of natural power as well as the Supreme Soul and the individual soul and thus the interpretation of Sāyaṇa should not be branded only as naturalistic.

In the same way Varuṇa is, for him, the encompasser and the guardian deity of water[53] and in reference to Mitra, he is the god of night[54] Sāyaṇa further says in reference to 'adabdhāni Varuṇasya vratāni' that he guides the courses which are to be followed by the planets so Varuṇa is the holder of the cosmic Law[55] Besides these cosmic characteristics he is also the supreme because one supreme Īśvara alone is invoked as many gods. Thus, we can sum up that

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50. Ait Ā 2 4 3
51 Sāyana 'Idi paramaiśvarye' iti dhātuh Svamāyayā jagadrūptvam paramaiśvaryam Tadyogādindraḥ
52 Inaśabdasyeśvaravācakasya akāralopa sati nakārāntam in iti padam bhavati √Dṛ bhaye iti Dhātuḥ Sa ca parameśvaraḥ śatrūṇāṁ dārayitā bhīṣayitetīndraḥ. √Dru gatau iti dhātuḥ. Śatrūṇāṁ drāvayitā palāyanam prāpayitetīndraḥ. Yajvanāṁ yāgānuṣṭhāyināmādarayitā bhayasya parihartā evametāni nirvacanāni draṣṭavyānīti.
53. Sāyaṇa on R V I 161 1 Varuṇaḥ āvarako jalābhimānī devaḥ,
54. Ibid., R.V.I. 162.1
Aharabhimānī devaḥ mitraḥ rātryabhimānī Varuṇaḥ
55. Ibid., R V 1.24 1
Vrruṇasya rājñaḥ vratāni karmāṇi nakṣatradarśanādirūpāṇi adabdhāni kenāpi ahimsitāni Kiñca Varuṇasyājñayaiva candramāḥ naktam rātrau vicākaśat viśeṣeṇa dīpyamānaḥ eti gacchati.

Sāyaṇa has interpreted the Vedic gods Indra and Varuṇa as symbols of cosmic powers as well as the source of these powers, the Supreme One.

The commentary of Sāyaṇa seems to have put a seal of finality on the meaning of Veda till the 19th century when the European Scholars got acquainted with the Vedas. The European scholars had two postulates i.e. the theory of evolution and a very strong sense of historicity that had actually pervaded the whole outlook of the West. 'Myth' had been understood by the scholars to mean a tale that is not according to facts and the term mythical was synonymous of false or it referred to the stories of scriptures which had only theological or religious importance They ascribed the Vedic Mythology to a primitive period of human civilization. Says A A Macdonell in the introduction to his Vedic Mythology, 'Such myths have their source in the attempt of human mind in a primitive and unscientific age to explain the various forms and phenomen of nature with which man was confronted. They represent infact the conjectural science of a primitive mental condition. . . . the basis of these myths is the primitive attitude of mind which regards all nature as an aggregate of animated entities'. The Western scholars regarded the literature at parallel with Homeric poems, the old Norse sagas and Roman accounts of the ancient Gaul and Teuton The European scholars were conscientious, speculative and ingenious and had a comparative methodology but they were unacquainted with the cultural and spiritual temperament that forms the very basis of a particular mythical thought. In spite of comparative philology, comparative mythology and comparative religion as means adopted by the Western scholarship to study the Veda, Sāyaṇa's commentary provided them with the guidelines The interpretation of Western scholars is in general ritualistic and meteorological though Maxmüller alludes to three characteristics of the Vedic gods First, they are natural phenomena Second, they are slowly transformed into divine godheads each representing the supreme power. Thirdly, these gods are manifestations of One Entity, the Supreme. Thus, the Vedic gods are all meant to express the Beyond, the Invisible behind the visible, the Infinite with-

in the finite, the Supernatural above the natural, the Divine, Omni-present and Omnipotent.[56] This view of Maxmüller is in no way akin to that of other European scholars who assert that these Vedic gods represent only the powers of nature. Macdonell says that because of their cosmic nature or because they are nearer to the physical phenomena indefiniteness of outline and lack of individuality are found in the conception of the Vedic gods. Certain great cosmical functions are predicated of nearly every leading deity individually. Thus Agni, primarily the god of terrestrial fire, dispels the demons of darkness with his light, while Indra, the aerial god of the thunderstorm slays them with his lightning Into the conception of the fire-god further enters his aspect as lightning in the atmosphere. The assimilation is increased by such gods often being invoked in pairs. These combinations result in attributes peculiar to the one god attaching themselves to the other even when the latter appears alone Thus Agni comes to be called Soma-drinker, Vrtra-slayer, winner of cows and waters, sun and dawns, attributes all primarily belonging to Indra.[57] Even then, according to Macdonell, all these gods have certain special cosmic traits Indra, for example, is primarily the thunder-god, the conquest of the demons of drought or darkness and the consequent liberation of the waters or the winning of light forming his mythological essence.[58] Indra is the dominant deity of the middle region. He pervades the air. He has a body, a head, arms and hands but this anthropomorphic appearence, though in a shadowy manner often represents only aspects of his natural bases figuratively described to illustrate his activities [59] Varuṇa in fact represents the encompassing sky and Mitra the sun that is naturally associated with the sky and this way Mitra and Varuṇa are cojointly invoked in the Vedic hymns Being the encompassing sky Varuṇa is naturally conceived as the guardian of men and as such the

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56. Maxmüller, The Vedas, p. 119
57. Macdonell, The Vedic Mythology, pp 15-16
58. Ibid. p. 54
59. Ibid., p. 17

moral governor. Macdonell explains that for the personification of its vast expanse, which encompasses and rises far above the earth and on which the most striking phenomena of regular recurrence, the movements of the luminaries, are enacted, would naturally be conceived as watching by night and day all the deeds of men and as being the guardian of unswerving law.[60]

Macdonell also gives a comparative assessment of the personalities of Indra and Varuṇa. According to him Varuṇa as concerned with the regularly recurring phenomena of celestial light is the supreme upholder of law in the moral as well as the physical world. Indra as the god fighting in the strife of the elements, was conceived by the militant Vedic Indian as a sovereign of the warrior type.[61] Thus Macdonell asserts that Indra and Varuṇa are the natural phenomena the former symbolising the warrior type and the latter accounting for the encompassing sky and as such the champion of law of the physical world.

Keith also affirms that the Vedic gods represent the different phenomena of nature presented in anthropomorphic figures but in case of Indra a different thing has happened Indra has been emancipated from his connection with the phenomena which produced the conception, primarily in all probability the thunder storm Keith says that this freedom from strict connection with nature is due to the difference of the elemental conception, the sun, the dawn the waters and fire are things ever seen, and the names bring back to the poet at once their essential character, but in case of Indra the meaning of his appellation was as obscure to the vedic poet as it is to us. Moreover, the fierce nature of Indra made him suited to be the war god of the conquering Aryans and afforded thus a point of departure permitting of the development of other than nature myths.[62] According to Keith Varuṇa is even more free from traces of nature and was really as i

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60 The Vedic Mythology, p 27

61 Ibid, p 28

62 Keith, The religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads, p 59.

most probable the sky; his essential feature has nothing necessarily connected with his natural background, he is the lord of the holy order, the watcher of men, whose vigilance nothing can escape.[63]

Oldenberg opines that Varuna was originally the moon and Mitra the sun[64] The conception of Varuṇa as moon god is also shared by Hillebrandt and by Hardy[65] Both Keith and Macdonell have objected to this theory. According to Macdonell this hypothesis advanced by Oldenberg does not seem to account at all well for the actual characteristics of Varuna in the Rgveda.[66] Keith also affirms that apart from the question of semitic origin the identification of Varuṇa with the moon is absolutely without support[67] The cosmological figure of Varuna as described by almost all the Europeon scholars, is that of the all encompassing sky who symbolizes morality and in fact is the champion governor of morality

J Muir classifying the Vedic gods on the lines of Yāska asserts that the Vedic gods represent the different cosmic powers Indra is thus representing the natural phenomena of thunder and lightning The grandest cosmical functions are ascribed to Varuna Possessed of illimitable resources, this divine being has meted out and upholds heaven and earth[68] Quoting Prof. Roth, Muir expands the idea that Varuna is also the god of sea because when on the one hand, the conception of Varuna as the all-embracing heaven had been established and on the other hand the observation of the rivers flowing towards the ends of the earth and to the sea had led to the conjecture that there existed an ocean enclosing the earth in its bosom, then the way was thoroughly pre-

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63 Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads p 60

64 Oldenberg, Rel Des Veda, p. 187

65. Hillebrandt, Vedic Myth. iii, p 1-51

66. Vedic Mythology, p 28

67 Keith, The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upaniṣads, p 103.

68 J. Muir, Original Sanskrit Texts on the origin and history of the people of India, Volume V. p. 61

pared for connecting Varuṇa with the ocean.[69] The natural phenomena stand personified and with the help of poetical imagery they are invoked as gods. In case of Indra the worshipper would at one time transform the fantastic shapes of the clouds into the chariots and horses of his god, and at another time would seem to perceive in their piled-up masses the cities and castles which Indra was advancing to overthrow.[70]

H D. Griswold also gives assent to this naturalistic interpretation of the Vedic gods who are symbols of the friendly forces of nature. Griswold says that the primitive man found himself in an environment partly helpful and partly untoward and perilous. There were all about him friendly objects and forces such as sunshine, rain, fire, dawn, rivers, etc. The very epithet 'friendly' applied above to 'objects' and 'forces' indicates incipient personification and shows the naturalness of the process. Then there were other forces which were hostile and perilous, such as drought, darkness and the mysterious causes of the blighting of crops, of disease and of death The friendly forces became gods and the hostile forces [71] This sort of personification of friendly forces of nature is very rudimentary in the case of Dyaus, Pṛthivī etc. because of their constant presence and obvious physical nature It is not so with Varuna and Indra whose original physical basis have been almost or quite forgotten and thus are the most completely personalized gods of the Vedic pantheon Then it follows logically, as Griswold states, that complete personification would be attained only in a condition of monotheism, when one god had taken to himself the attributes and functions of all gods.[72] In this way Griswold interprets the Vedic gods but regarding monotheism he gives his own point of view. According to him every department of nature and of life is brought under the control of some deity All the deities together function as a unity. The unity of the divine activity is not the unity of individual will

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69. Original Sanskrit Texts Volume V, p. 75
70 Ibid , p. 98
71. Griswold, The Religion of the Ṛgveda. p. 80
72. Ibid , p 87

as in monotheism, but the unity formed by the collective will of a clan, the clan of the devas. The multiplicity of the Vedic gods reflects the multitudious aspects of nature and of life; and the unity which, on the whole, pervades the diverse activities of the gods reflects, in like manner, the unity of nature, the fact that the universe is a cosmos and ordered whole.[73] One of the great conceptions of the Ṛgveda is that of Ṛta 'order' and all the gods are alike in either determining, or expressing or guarding some aspect or other of Ṛta. Through the great conception of Ṛta the multiplicity of nature is reduced to a unity and the multiplicity of the gods is seen to reflect a single will, because all are labourers together in maintaining a single all-comprehensive cosmic order.[74] Griswold explains Ṛta at length and says that as consciousness has the three aspects of knowing, feeling and willing, so Ṛta has three stands of meaning, cosmic, ritualistic and ethical. Varuna is the lord of ethical law, Agni of ritualistic law and Indra of cosmic law as displayed in the flash of the lightning, the roar of the thunder, and the downpour of the waters.[75] Without going to further details let us sum up the view of Griswold that all Vedic gods are representatives of certain cosmic powers and their anthropomorphic figures are symbols of great cosmic unity which is present all through and explained in terms of Ṛta

In interpreting the cosmic powers of Indra, certain theories are put forth by the Western scholars. The most important is the storm theory, according to which Vṛtra is the malignant evil spirit i e. the cloud which obstructs rains and Indra is none but the god of rain, who with the help of the storm-winds pierces through the cloud, kills Vṛtra and causes the waters to flow forth and come down in showers. This theory has been refuted on the ground that the typical verse where it is stated that Indra, the dragon-slayer set in motion the flood of waters of the sea, generated the sun and found the cows describes three aspects of Indra's personality. Now all

73 Griswold, The Religion of the Rigveda, p. 107
74 Ibid., p. 108
75. Ibid., p. 201

these three phenomena cannot be accounted for by the storm theory."[76] There is another view known as the 'Dawn theory' according to which Indra is the sun exterminating noctural darkness and pouring floods of light for the world of living beings. Macdonell has rejected this theory stating that there appears to be a confusion between the motion of the restoration of the sun after the darkness of the thunder-storm and recovery of the sun from the darkness of the night at dawn.[77] Another theory has been proposed by Hillebrandt where he states that Vṛtra is the name of the confiner, who holds captive the waters of rivers on the hights of glacier mountains and Indra being the summer sun, frees the waters from this confiner.[78] This theory has been rejected by scholars as this phenomenon would be worth the name, only in extremely northern countries. All these theories have one thing to say that Indra is a cosmic power and a saviour of the world who has been given an anthropomorphic figure and worshipped by the Vedic people It is a different matter whether he represents the sun or the thunder. B G Tilak also believes in this naturalistic interpretation of Indra who according to him is the releaser of waters.[79]

Varuṇa according to most of the Western scholars is the symbol of encompassing sky and in his anthropomorphic figure, he is the preserver of Ṛta. Oldenberg thinks that he represents the moon and his theory has been denounced by Macdonell and others as already explained above. Others say that Mitra is the god of day or light and Varuna is the god of night. Varuṇa's association with night is most beautifully explained by Prof. Roth in his paper on 'The highest gods of the Arian races.[80] There he says that if Varuna is, as his name shows, that one among the lucid Ādityas whose seat and sphere of authority is the bright heaven, in his bosom is embraced all that lives and therefore also the remotest boundary beyond which human

76 Ghate, V S Lectures on the Ṛgveda, p 138
77. Vedic Mythology, p 61
78 Hillebrandt, Vedische Mythologie, Vol. III p 157
79 Tilak, Arctic Home, P. 269
80 Roth, Journal of the Oriental Society VI. p. 70f.

thought seeks nothing further, then is he also one who can scarcely be attained either by the eye or by the imagination. By day the power of vision cannot discover this remotest limit, the bright heaven presents to it no resting place. But at night the veil of the world in which Varuṇa is enthroned appears to approach nearer, and becomes perceptible, for the eye finds a limit Varuṇa is closer to men Besides, the other divine forms which, in the clouds, the atmosphere, the rays of light, filled the space between the earth and Yonder immeasurable outermost sphere, have disappeared; no other god now stands between Varuṇa and the mortal who gazes at him In this way Roth has associated Varuna with night.

Among the modern Indian interpretors of the Veda, the first one is Swami Dayananda who made a remarkable attempt to revive the Vedic studies and establish Veda as a living religious scripture In his interpretation he made a creative use of the etymological philology of Nirukta and the 'multisignificance of roots' to bring out metaphysical, social, spiritual, ethical and even the scientific meanings of the Vedic hymns. According to him the religious teaching of the Veda is monotheistic and the Vedic gods are different descriptive names of one deity.[81] He does not however believe in absolutism of the Upaniṣads He interprets Indra as Īśvara and an ideal king. Varuna is also the name of One Supreme and the Chief Justice, on the spiritual and the social levels of meaning respectively.

The next very significant contribution to the study of Veda is by Sri Aurobindo who explains his hypothesis in these words, 'Veda has a double aspect and that the two, though closely related, must be kept apart The Ṛṣis arranged the substance of their thought in a system of parallelism by which the same deities were at once internal and external powers of universal Nature, and they managed its expression through a system of double values by which the same language served for their worship in both aspects But the psychological sense predominates and is more pervading, close-knit and coherent than the physical. The Veda is primarily intended to serve for

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81. Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā, p 92

spiritual enlightenment and self culture. It is, therefore, the sense which has first to be restored'.[82]

Sri Aurobindo sees a constant relation between the different notions and cherished terms of the Vedic religion, which have correspondingly psychological significance. There is the series of outer physical light, another higher and inner light which is the vehicle of the mental, vital and psychic consciousness and the highest inmost light of spiritual illumination. Sūrya, the sun-god, was the lord of the physical Sun, but he is at the same time to the Vedic seer poet the giver of the rays of knowledge which illumines the mind and he is too the soul and energy and body of the spiritual illumination and in all these powers he is luminous form of the one and infinite godhead All the Vedic godheads have this outer and this inner and inmost function, their known and their secret names.[83]

According to this symbolical or psychological interpretation of the Vedie gods Indra represents Mind-Power or Power in Mind The word for the sense-faculties, indriya is derived from his name Aurobindo also explains that Indra is the Ruler of our being, Master of *Svar* which is the luminous world of the divine Mind Agni is the pole of force; Indra is the pole of Light instinct with force which descends from heaven to earth with shining horses, slays darkness and division, pours down life-giving heavenly waters, makes the sun mount high in the heaven of our mentality Indra is thus the lord of the realm of pure intelligence, i e. the master of luminous worlds It represents the mind-power released from the limits and obstructions of the nervous consciousness.

Nature of Varuna is also explained on symbolical lines by Sri Aurobindo Varuṇa comes from the root which means to surround, cover or pervade; the same root had given the Ṛsis an appellation for the dark Coverer, Vṛtra, for to obstruct and resist, screen or hedge, besiege and hem in are also some of its many kindred senses. According to Sri Aurobindo,

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82 On the Veda, p 34

83. Foundations of Indian Culture Ch II p. 164

Varuna is a highest covering heaven, the soul-surrounding Ocean, ethereal possession and infinite pervasion. Refuting the contentions of the European scholars Sri Aurobindo says that the European scholars have identified him with the Greek Uranus and perceiving something of his original ethereal nature have supposed a conceptual transference, a sort of fall or even a deposition from azure above to azure below. Indra, perhaps becoming master of the skies and king of the gods, Varuna the original king had to be satisfied with a dominion of the waters. If we understand the symbolic method of the mystics, we shall see that these suppositions are unnecessary. All expanses are Varuṇa's, every infinity is his property and estate. Indra is the king of the heavens of light. Ether and ocean become one in the mystic conception. What the ancients saw was what man will ever see when he changes the physical for the psychological vision of Nature—below them the unfathomable Night and surging obscurity, darkness hidden within darkness Above them a remote ocean of light and sweetness, a highest ether, the supreme step of all blissful Viṣṇu. These two were the dark and the shining extensions of the One Sri Aurobindo further says that they saw before them a third sea of ever-developing conscious being, a sort of boundless wave which they spoke of as climbing up beyond heaven to the supreme seas. It is this perilous ocean which we have to navigate. This world is a series of heights that are *depths and a mutual involution and evolution of vastnesses* that have no ending; ether below rises to ever more luminous ether above; every stratum of consciousness rests upon many inferior and aspires to many higher strata. All these oceans are Varuṇa's From this idea of the oceans arose naturally the psychological concept of the Vedic rivers. Oceanic Varuṇa is the king of all these waters. He is the oceanic surge of the hidden Divine as he rises, progressively manifested, to his own infinite wideness and ecstasy in the soul of the god-liberated seer. He shatters the false formations of the Lords of Evil What the Ṛṣis perceived was a great insistent force of Ignorance no crude conception of sin which is the cause of wrong and suffering. Varuṇa is the purifier. The kingship of Varuṇa is an unbounded empire

over all beings; he is an emperor. It is a force of universal existence which is active around and in all that lives. He is the guardian of the Truth He is the leader on the Path and the Path is a constant making and building of new truth, new powers, higher realisations, new worlds He of the wideness Varuṇa represents the ethereal purity and oceanic wideness of the infinite truth "[84]

According to the micro cosmic interpretation of V G Rele, the Vedic mythical figures stand as symbols of certain biological activities in the physical body of the human being Thus for Rele Indra is the conscious force residing in the cortical layer of the brain and Vṛtra and his allies, the wicked demons and serpents are the subconscious forces in the nerve centres which appear as elevated projections on the floor of the fourth ventricle behind the medulla oblongata Rele further says that in order to govern these sub-conscious activities, Indra tries to liberate the pent-up waters in the fourth ventrical by slaying the eldest of the serpents that guard the opening This victory he achieves by sending conscious efferent impulses through his Vajra, the peduncles of the cerebrum, which act in the floor of the fourth ventricle, with the help of the chief subsidiary motor centre (Sūrya) which was hitherto absolutely powerless to exert control over these autonomic nerve centres He is thus said to shine by his own ocean of waters which surrounds the nervous system. The flowing out of the pent up waters lowers the pressure within the cavities in the brain and that puts a stop to the generation of subconscious activities residing in the elevated nerve centres and liberates them like cows from their confinement [85] Before achieving this end, Indra had to forsake the company of his allies, the Maruts (the efferent impulses from within and without) which were concerned in the common everyday exploits of Indra He had to make himself unimpressionable to achieve this end so as to direct all his energy to the control of the sub-conscious activities [86] Rele is of the opinion that this episode of the Indra-Vṛtra fight is the germ

84 Sri Aurobindo, On the Veda, pp 493-502
85 V G Rele, The Vedic Gods, p. 103
86 Ibid.

of yogic practices and the phenomena of later yogic literature, the Vṛtra of Vedic literature being replaced in Yoga by the Kuṇḍalinī. Rele's theory, thus, interprets the fight between Indra and Vṛtra as a conflict between the conscious and the unconscious from which the former emerges victorious [87]

Rele's interpretation differs from that of Aurobindo as Rele has found the biological meanings of the Vedic gods where as Sri Aurobindo, on a wider level talks of the psycho-physico nature of the Vedic gods in relation to ourself. For example if for Rele Indra is manifested through the cerebro-spinal nervous system which controls the physical body then for Aurobindo Indra is the mind power released from the limits and obstructions of the nervous consciousness It seems to us that Rele is influenced by Aurobindo.

Explaining the biological nature of Varuna Rele says that if the activity of Indra is manifested through the cerebro-spinal nervous system, the necessary force for its manifestation comes from Varuna, the fluid which surrounds the brain in the subarachnoid cavity. Varuṇa is the cerebro-spinal fluid that surrounds the brain and its spinal-cord, the heavenly and the terrestrial regions Varuna is therefore said to be clothed in water The white-shining robes which he wears are the two glistening membranes, the Piamater and the Arachnoid In the space between these membranes that the cerebro-spinal fluid is located which is called the god that rules the waters By the rhythmic pressure that it exerts it pours down rain in the form of efferent impulses through the invested cask of the heaven (i e the brain) whose convex surface remains in contact with it The impulse generated by the god Varuṇa flows as rain through heaven (the brain) and spreads over the terrestrial regions (the spinal cord) as showers that peremeate the soil (muscles, tissue etc) to feed the crop in the form of desires [88]

N V. Thadani in his book 'The Mystery of the Mahābhārata'[89] has interpreted the Vedic gods on macrocosmic and microcosmic levels.

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87 Rele, V G. The Vedic Gods, p. 103

88. Ibid , p 123

89 Thadanī, The Mystery of the Mahābbārata Vol ii, p. 1

According to him there are five great creative energies of life in the world-super-electric energy, heat, electric energy and the two poles of magnetic energy Heart is characterised by super-electric energy with a very high voltage, and, like the latter it has its positive and negative sides; of these the soul, said to abide in the heart, may be regarded as positive, and the vital (fluid) energy or semen virile, created out of food, negative; while Prāna or vital Breath, the vehicle of the soul as well as the swallower of food, and so the connecting link between them, positive and negative both Buddhi or Reason is the higher energy or the brain, and corresponds to the energy of the sun or heat. Mind is the lower energy of the brain, and corresponds to the energy of the moon or electricity. As electric energy is similar to super electric energy, mind and heart are regarded as akin. The two poles of magnetic energy are connected with the five elements and their properties as well as the senses of knowledge and action in man Now these five great creative energies of life, which are characterised as heart, brain, mind and five elements are supposed to be symbolized by the different Vedic gods Viṣṇu, Varuna, and Vāyu refer to the threefold character of the Heart,Soul, vital energy and breath, Agni and Indra to Buddhi; Soma and Rudra to the Mind; and Dyaus and Pṛthivi and the two Aśvins to the two-fold character of Ether, with its north and south magnetic poles. In this way Thadani observes that the gods of the Vedas represent the energies of the organic cell, and it is this that, in its universal form, gives us the idea of Brahmāṇḍa or the manifest universe

'As in the microcosm so in the macrocosm (Yathā piṇḍe tathā brahmāṇḍe)'—the ancient dictum of Indian metaphysical thought is accepted by Damodara Satvalekar who says that all these gods have two-fold characters One is the universal character where gods denote cosmic powers and the other is the microcosmic character where gods denote different parts of the physical body and the self of the human being. Satvalekar also refers to the mythical characteristics of the Vedic devatās where they are holding different positions in the heaven His main contention is this that all the 33 gods represent different

powers of the human body and the self.[90] Indra is the soul[91] and Varuṇa in the sender of the waters from above known as the Vāruṇī Vṛṣṭi that increases the vitality of the human body.[92] The modern Indian scholars like Aurobindo and Dayanand have attempted to unfold the conceptual truth of the myths of Indra-Vṛtra fight, winning of Soma, fight with Uṣās and Indra-Ahalyā legend The battle of Indra and Vṛtra, symbolizes the conflict between nescience and divine light. The battle of Devas and Asuras stands for the struggle between good and bad feelings of mind.[93] The Soma wine is according to Sri Aurobindo the flow of divine joy[94] and Uṣās is the divine dawn that awakens the soul from the sleep of ignorance[95] Saramā is respected by the seers and the gods as one who follows Ṛta, the path of truth[96] Ahalyā is the name of the night or sinful mind because the day or goodness is absorbed into it Her seducer Indra is the sun or the lustre of purity and at its advent the night or sin fades away. Among the Western scholars of the 19th century it was A. Bergaigne who sought correspondences and parrallelism between the ritualistic set up, social order, the microcosom and the aerial world of the gods—the macrocosom The Vedic seers aimed at a co-ordination between the function of the religious ceremonial and the society on the design of the perfect working of cosmic order and this was represented in this poetic imagery that they conceived. The word Ṛta signifies the cosmic order to which human order, ethics and social behaviour correspond[97]

Dayanand revived the most ancient tradition of Vedic interpretation by referring to its multilevel significance

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90. Dāmodar Sātavalekar, Indraśakti kā vikāsa, p. 82
91. D. Sātavalekara, Daivata Samhitā p. 3
92. D Sātavalekar, Indraśaki kā Vikāsa p, 66
93 Dayānanda, Ṛgvedādibhāṣyabhūmikā
94 Aurobindo, On the Vedas
95 See, Kapali's Siddhāñjanabhāṣya
96 See, H. L. Hariyappa, Ṛgvedic legends through the ages.
97 A Bergaigne, 'Recherches Sur l histiore de la liturgie Vedique,' J. Asiat, 1889

and influenced Aurobindo and other Indian scholars who worked on the Veda in the beginning of this century who in their turn seem to have slightly given another direction to the second generation of Western scholars of Veda who although are not quite free from the historical approach, have started to regard the Vedas as, having a universal and archetypal appeal As says L Renou, 'The subject is still further complicated by the fact that in the doings of the gods there are several levels of significance '[98]

M Dumézil's interpretation according to Sanskrit terminology is the Ādhibhautika one He has brought to light the various social functions which underlie Indo-European mythology, these functions are respectively religious, juridical, military and temporal and economic[99] Says L Renou, 'It would never be my intention to try to find a single key to the interpretation of the Veda Mythological legend, considered itself, expresses many widely differing truths '[100] According to him the most expressive of these myths are those which deal in some way with the creation of the universe, the establishment of heaven and earth, the coming of light and the release of waters About the struggle of Vrtra and Indra he says, 'The word Vrtra used as a neuter noun meant the defences of the evening Later it came to be used as the name of a demon in the shape of a dragon or a serpent identified with Ahi We cannot account etymologically for the existence of a neuter noun Vrtra, unless we trace it back to an abstract idea, just as Mitra was no doubt 'compact' personified, and 'Varuṇa' was the 'act of covering' or perhaps 'the act of binding together'. These abstract ideas lie behind many instances of hypostatization: the idea of evil is never clearly personified as a major demon, but is represented under the multiple forms of 'hostility', 'violence', 'resistence' To translate these words as personal names or agent nounts is to do violence to Vedic terminology [101]

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98 Religions of Ancient India p. 14

99 M. Dumezil, The Indo-European Heritage in Rome (London, 1949)

100 L Renou, Religions of Ancient India, p 18

101 Ibid p 19.

L. Renou seems to have reached the spirit of Vedic mythology but is not able to be rid off the historical postulate and the bygone theory of the Varuna's supercession by Indra. 'The allegiance to Indra by gods and men alike, the eclipse of Varuna, the acceptance of the Aśvins, the advent of Rudra, none of these events could have been accomplished without great upheavals '[102] He refers to the association of divinities in pairs like Dyāvāpṛthivi, Mitrāvaruṇā, Indrāgni, Indrāviṣṇu etc., and marks the predominance of Indra saying that the Vedic myth becomes 'Indraized' but he does not however recognize the element of complementary dualism in the pair of Indra and Varuṇa About Indra he says, 'Indra is a hero of ancient times and retains the appearance and characteristics of a hero Apart from Kṛṣṇa, he is the only Indian god who even had a childhood, and whose personality and actions betray human element.[103]

H Luders's work on Varuṇa is of great significance Luder discussing the location of Varuna says, 'the passages which discribe the residence of Varuna in waters are so numerous and so absolutely clear that it will not be proper to push those aside simply as secondary as others do and talk of Varuna only as the moon god and god of the dark night's sky [104] He does not feel that there is any incompatibility regarding the residence of sky and waters. These waters are filled with all sorts of things like madhu, milk or Soma 'The Vedic Indian transferred the earthly phenomena to the sky If it rains it is alleged some god must be striding a hole in the heavenly cover, or tilting or overturning barrel or the cask so tnat the nourishing moisture pours down on earth.'[105]

J. Gonda clearly is pointing to insufficient understanding of the Vedic myth of Indra by the earlier Western scholars when he says 'suffice is to say that the ancient view that it was nothing but a myth explaining the phenomenon of the thunderstorm and describing the release of the water, fails to account for

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102 Renou, L Religions of Ancient India, p. 20.
103. Ibid , p. 22
104. Lüders. H. Varuṇa 1, Göttengen 1951, p. 9
105. Ibid, p. 10

many particulars in the texts. After the studies, devoted to the subject by Benveniste and Renou and by Luders it seems clear that the central myth refers to a cosmic drama of paramount importance and that it probably was the product of a variety of influences and conceptions, the nucleus of which was the well-known and ever-changing, growing, blending motive of the dragon killer, represented by or having fused with the divinity of victoriousness over obstruction, barring and impediments In the Vedic Vṛtra combat of the release of waters was considered the central feature, andt his occurrence meant the transformation of an inhabitable chaotic universe into a cosmos '.[106]

In his discussion on Varuṇa Anand K Coomarswami says, 'Varuṇa was originally the root of the tree of life, the source of all creation (RV. I 24.7), and it is presumably still Varuṇa who is called the unborn in RV. I. 24.7. Unborn and 'the Recumbent' (uttānapāda, with legs outstretched) in RV X. 72 2 and 3, and a great Yakṣa reclining in tapas upon the back of the waters in AV X 7.38 where the tree springs from his naval; though this formula is soon inherited by Prajāpati (YV V. 6 4) and then by Nārāyana (Viṣnu) who retains it to this day.[107] Tracing the continuity of the myth of the world tree from Varuṇa to Viṣṇu he refers to the striking resemblance in ethical character between Viṣṇu and Varuṇa, Viṣṇu in heaven and Rāma on earth are both ideally righteous wealthy kings on whom as such naturally depends the prosperity of the universe or the earth. It is also noteworthy that Viṣṇu's complexion is said to be blue like the ether while Varuṇa's (V ṣṇudharmottara) is said to be of the hue of water when the sky is reflected in it.[108] Thus according to A K. Coomaraswamy the concept of the cosmic functioning originally represented by Varuṇa did not undergo any change but got new names or symbols. According to him, the creation myths of the water-cosmology (especially the churning of the ocean, and the tree

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106 Gonda J Aspects of Early Viṣnuism, p 30
107. Coomarswamy, A. K. Yakṣas, p. 29
108. Ibid. 35

myth in its various forms), which are later so conspicuously connected with Viṣṇu, are really inherited from Varuṇa.[109] Further, tracing the Grail legend of western Europe to Indian origin he connects it to Varuṇa and says that behind Varuṇa there may lie some even more ancient Iranian or Indo-Iranian pre-Aryan Lords of life. Coomarswamy has significantly identified Varuṇa not only with Viṣṇu but Soma, Agni and moon also

It has been explained before that these two mythical figures outwardly represent certain cosmic powers—Indra, the sun[110] and Varuṇa the all-encompassing sky.[111] In relation to Mitra Varuṇa also represents the night. Night is that phenomenon in which the light-giving luminary, the Sun is merged in In later mythology Varuna is delineated only as the god of ocean but we know that the word 'Samudra' meaning only ocean in the later language, originally denoted the sky, the ocean as well as the source or the place of origin *By* sun we do not understand only the physical sun but the spirit in the sun who is Indra. And the spirit in the sun is the absolute entity, the Supreme Puruṣa In this way Indra stands for the Eternal and at the same time indicates a separate power or personality of the supreme because all the gods are the various powers of the Supreme, Ekaṁ sat Likewise, by the all-encompassing sky we do not only mean the physical sky but the all-encompassing desire of the great Puruṣa by which the universal Puruṣa as well as the individual Puruṣa are enveloped. This Divine Will, in the metaphysical region, is the god Varuna, who is also the lord of Ṛta because by the Veda the sky is denoted by Samudra and Samudra is known as Ṛta-samudra or Ṛta-sadana. The two words satya and Ṛta used in the Veda denote the eternal truth and the truth of movement respectively as is affirmed from the derivation of the words. 'Satya' comes from the root *√as* 'to be' denoting beingness or the truth of being and 'Ṛtam' comes from the

109 Yakṣas, p. 36

110. The Vedic compounds Mitrā-Varuṇa and Indrā-Varuṇa and also 'saptaraśmi' in the mantra in Indra Sūkta (2 12.12) clearly indicates the identity of Indra with Sūrya.

111. Varuṇaḥ vṛṇotīti sataḥ-Nirukta, 10,3.

root√ṛ to 'move or to act' meaning the truth of action. The truth of being or 'Satya' is the supreme truth and 'Ṛtam' is the inferior covering truth Indra represents the former and Varuṇa the latter Fundamentally the truth of being and the truth of action are only the two aspects of the One 'Ekaṁ Sat.' And so Indra and Varuṇa known also as Mitrāvaruṇā represent the two aspects of the One. On the analogy of the same *Indra* or *Mitra* representing the day and *Varuṇa* representing the night uncoil the two aspects of Time—the bright and the dark which do not represent discord but harmony. In the macrocosmos, Indra stands for the Purusa and Varuṇa indicates the all-encompassing ocean of primeval matter or *Virāj* So *Indra* and *Varuṇa* are both delineated as Devas representing the two harmonious powers of the Ekam Sat

From the philosophical point of view, as we all know the individual soul dwelling in the body is not different from the Ekaṁ Sat or the Supreme Soul therefore these two harmonious powers of the Supreme Soul—Indra and Varuṇa-when explained on microcosmic lines represent the Jivātman and the Kuṇḍalinī Śakti respectively i e, one is the consciousness and the other is the gross form of consciousness In other words in the individual body (Piṇḍa) Indra and Varuṇa stand for Jīvātman and Jīva Prakṛti Thus Indra and Varuṇa represent the positive and the negative aspects of the cosmic reality. The positive and the negative aspects do not display incongruity but are complementary to each other and at the same time identical with the Supreme Reality, that is One.

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